

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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CONCERNING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THIS MINISTRY

APOSTOLIC SIMPLICITY SHOULD STILL PREVAIL

ALL WHO are imbued with the Spirit of Christ as His consecrated followers, are ever exercised by deep arid tender concern for the welfare of all the fellow members; and all such are watchful for the spiritual interests of Zion. In the providence of God there have ever been those circumstances amongst the true followers of Christ in which they have had need for one another, and there have ever been those opportunities of laying down strength and life on behalf of other members of the Body. Such circumstances in the Church are permitted because they are conducive to spirituality and to the fulfillment of the Divine will concerning the development of the character of Christ in God's children. In other words it has been the building up of the Body in spirituality, faith, Christlikeness, and love that has constituted the mission of disciples of Christ. And such it is at the present time.

The fact that we are now living in the closing days of the Church's career changes not this situation. The brethren need to comfort one another, to strengthen the feeble knees, and lift up the hands that hang down, to make straight paths for their feet.

It has been in order to facilitate such ministry in the Church that this association was originally formed some twelve years ago, and such provisions made in this connection that this spiritual ministry and edifying of the Body in holy things might be enhanced. The Lord has been pleased to show His favor in rich measure, and to give much encouragement in connection with the feeble endeavors put forth. It has been and still is a time of confusion and sore need -- need of a helping hand and of the voice of compassion and love, to direct the troubled sheep so that they might discern the true Shepherd and follow His leading.

In this association there have been employed those methods and proceedings, service, and activity that are purely Apostolic, and such as were employed in the primitive Church, and such in fact as were enjoined upon the Church for the entire Age, "until we all come," -- until the completion of the entire Christ. One of the most important considerations for brethren to observe who would really edify the Body, is to avoid everything in the nature of lordship and authority in the Church, to avoid anything and everything that would savor of organizational bondage or that would interfere in the slightest with the liberty of the sheep. The creation of offices in the Church that results in establishing brethren in positions of authority as dictators or rulers in any sense, would most certainly be in violation of the Apostolic simplicity, wherein all were on one common footing and individually subject to but the one Head, Christ.

As in these days a larger number of brethren are finding their way out of bondage and are realizing their privileges of standing fast in the liberty

wherewith they have been made free, and are meeting together in various places for mutual comfort, the question is being asked, Should not the brethren of this association introduce some radical changes of policy and method of operation in our midst? May it now be the due time to consolidate forces and to launch out into a larger plan of organization? Our reply is that it does not so seem to us. We see nothing in the present circumstances to warrant a change of policy or method of operation in the ministry at this time; for as a matter of fact, it is the simplicity of the primitive Church that we have been following, and none are authorized to change from that. The history of human organizational effort in the Church does not present a very glowing record. Too often man's energy humanly organized in the Church has resulted in depriving the brethren of their essential and God-given liberties, and in suppressing spirituality. It is true that great movements have been created and "great and wonderful works" advanced by such procedure, but the spirituality of the Church has always been neglected and relegated to the back ground whenever the element of human organization has entered in and predominated.

Holy Spirit Faithful Guide

When the great and important fact is borne in mind that it is the Holy Spirit after all that is really directing and developing the Church, that it is the Holy Spirit that constitutes the real source of energy and achievement in spirituality, and in the edifying of the Church, it becomes manifest that God does not need earthly wisdom and energy to operate after the manner of man's organized plans and purposes. The Apostolic counsel and simplicity still appeal to us as being the instruction of our Divine Master, and as representing the Good Shepherd's voice directing His sheep.

Furthermore, the present is a time of severe stress and trial upon God's people the world over, and we feel that we do well to exercise great care and sobriety that we do not run to excesses in any direction. During the years that this ministry has been going on, the will of the Lord has been earnestly sought with regard to what would be acceptable and wise policies and methods, and we would not now be hasty to put aside that which He is greatly blessing, to introduce something that we would not be sure would have the Divine approval. Indeed the brethren throughout the world who are interested in this ministry may be sure that those who have been entrusted with the care of this service, have the work and ministry of the Lord very thoroughly at heart, and are deeply anxious to promote the spiritual interests of all God's children, and just as readily as He may indicate that there should be changes, His direction and leading will be followed and acted upon accordingly:

Finally, let us all do with our might what our hands find to, do and comfort ourselves with the assurance that the Master who is over all, knoweth them that are His and will exercise His keeping power for the protection and guidance of all His faithful sheep.

OUR POLISH BRETHREN ENDURE WELL

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is -to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as

ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy." -- 1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

THUS WROTE the Apostle Peter, faithfully warning the Church with regard to what they were to expect along the line of fiery trials, crucial tests, etc. Nor are the closing days of the Age in which we are now living, any exception, for this time is one prominently marked in Holy Writ as fraught with tests of the most searching character: "Every man's work shall be tried," etc., preparatory to his acceptance into the Heavenly Kingdom.

Perhaps few have learned to value the discipline of the Lord as did the faithful Apostle Who wrote these words. While he, as well as others, realized that no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous, yet knowing the ministry of such discipline, and recognizing it as an additional evidence of sonship to God, he rejoiced in, being a partaker of it.

In the issue of the "Herald" of June 1st, page 164 reference was made in a brief article to a large number of Polish brethren in the vicinity of Dearborn, Mich., who in the Lord's providence had recently realized their privilege of coming out of bondage to men into the liberty of Christ, and were rejoicing in the happier outlook spiritually and in the freedom of the sons of God. These friends advise us that many of their brethren in various cities such as Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Buffalo, are taking a similar stand with them. We have been keeping in touch with these brethren in Dearborn, and learn that since taking their stand in defense of truth and liberty, they have met with further severe tests and trials, in which attempt from another source was made to lead them into a deeper and worse bondage if possible than that from which they were recently delivered.

For What Purpose Are the Fiery Trials?

Report of this recent severe test has come to us in same detail, which gives evidence that these dear brethren have deported themselves well, and have evinced deep spiritual discernment and recognition of that which is contrary to sound doctrine and the mind of Christ, and that they have shown keen appreciation of those truths and principles that are of the utmost importance and that should ever prevail in the councils of the Lord's people.

We congratulate these friends on their discernment faith, and courage, and would earnestly bid them Godspeed in their noble stand and in the earnest efforts to assist one another in this time of urgent need. The promise of the Lord's keeping power will surely be fulfilled to all those whose trust is stayed on Him. Some have asked, Why is it that fiery trials must come to God's children? Is there no way of gaining the crown without these crosses? No, there is not; for if ye receive not the discipline of trial whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Trials of faith and patience and love and endurance are as necessary to our development and our fitting for the high position to which we are called, as are the instructions of Divine grace. The blessed sunshine and shower have their benign influence, but none the less the cloud and the storm; but we need ever to bear in mind that God is in the whirlwind and in the storm.

Like water upon the parched earth, and like sunshine to vegetation after winter snows, so the message of Divine truth comes to us and with it the blessed realization of Divine favor. In the joy of our new-found treasure we are apt to think at first that we have actually entered the Beulah land of joy and peace where sorrow and trial can never more come to us. But no; there are sorrows ahead and trials beyond, and you will need all the strength which the Truth can give and all the blessed influences that Divine grace can impart to enable you to endure faithfully to the end.

But do not stop to worry about the trials until they come; only remember the Apostle's words -- "Think it not strange," when they do come. They come to prove you and to strengthen your character and to cause the principles of truth and righteousness to take deep root in your heart. They come like fiery darts from our great enemy -- Satan; whose wrath against the children of light is permitted to manifest itself in various ways; but his darts cannot injure those who securely buckle on the divinely provided armor of truth and righteousness. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "take unto you the whole armor of God, . . . above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

The Christian life is thus set forth as a warfare -- a warfare, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12.) In other words, as Christians imbued with the spirit of our Master, we find the principles of truth and righteousness which we have espoused to be at variance with the whole present order of things, which is to a very large extent under the control of "the prince of this world," -- Satan. And when sin is thus so inwrought throughout the whole social fabric of the present Age; and not only so, but when we also find the flesh, our own old nature, in harmony with it, we see into what close quarters we must come with the enemy, and what a hand to hand and life-long struggle it must needs be. Yet our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and the Apostle says they are

mighty for the pulling down of the strongholds of error and iniquity. -- 2 Cor. 10 :4, 5.

When, therefore, the fiery trials and darts from the enemy come upon you, be ready as an armed soldier of the cross to meet and withstand them. If you run away from them, you are a coward, and not worthy to be called a soldier.

A VISIT TO THE LAND OF PROMISE

TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND

Series VII.

IN THE forenoon of one of Jerusalem's perfect spring days we start for the Jordan and the Dead Sea, planning to stop at Jericho for the noon luncheon. Jericho is fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, and the Jordan is five miles farther on.

We pass Gethsemane as we skirt the Mount of Olives, and stop at Bethany just three miles along the way. It is today a miserable appearing Arab village whose boasted traditional sites--the remains of the house of Martha and Mary and of Simon the Leper, and the tomb of Lazarus, are not worth the stepping from the auto to see. But who would sweep through Bethany without a pause? For somewhere within a short radius of where we stand, once stood the restful home where Jesus of Nazareth loved to be, and our eyes take in the same view that so often met His eyes, the magnificent sweep of the valley below to the distant mountains beyond.

All the way from the Mount of Olives to the Jordan Valley we are descending by sharp curves, for Jerusalem stands at an altitude of 2,500 feet, and the Dead Sea is nearly 1,300 feet below sea level, in all a descent of 3,800 feet. One experiences a remarkable change of climate in this six-hour trip; for in the summer the Dead Sea region is one of the hottest places in the world. At our feet the country lies before us like some finely executed map in relief of billowy hills and deep ravines, growing barer, and barer, until something of the real Judean wilderness is about us., We, pass the ruins of the old inn, the "Good, Samaritan Inn,," which offered a half-way stopping place . for travelers in the days when the trip with horses and carriages took two days.

Jericho

Just six miles this side Jordan there is a mound some 1,200 feet in length, which marks the ruins of ancient Jericho, the modern representative being a poor, little village a mile farther on. From the base of the mound issues a famous fountain which still furnishes a supply of pure water for modern Jericho and water for irrigation. This is traditionally known as Elisha's Fountain.

Here by the cool water shepherds are resting with a large flock; or perhaps their combined flocks, of sheep and black goats. I find nothing appealing, in these mixed numbers, and my eyes have been searching here and there throughout Palestine for a real flock, an unadulterated one, with fleeces shining silvery white in the sun, with the shepherd leading to green pastures, sheep that listen to his voice; but so far the flocks have been mere handfuls, spotted with black goats.

Excavations are in progress upon the old mound of Jericho. It is hard to imagine so barren and depressing a place as once the site of that "City of Palms," surrounded, according to Josephus, by a "Divine region" and "the fattest in Judea." But the water carried then by an extensive system of canals, permitted cultivation of groves of palms, large sugar plantations, and gardens of roses.

The location of the three celebrated cities that stood here is uncertain. There was the Jericho that Joshua destroyed after its walls had fallen at the sound of the holy trumpets; the Jericho built during the time of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha, presented to Cleopatra by Antony and sold by her to Herod to build his new palaces; and the Jericho of the first centuries of the Christian era. The poor little town today is the lowest city in the world, and though it prides itself as a good winter resort for Jerusalem, it is intensely hot in summer, almost unbearably so, for the surrounding of the Dead Sea not far away are 800 feet lower than our own Death Valley.

Jordan and the Dead Sea

After the noon meal, which one of the Hotel's guests partook of very lightly, for the native idea of cleanliness is quite foreign to our own, we leave the small, green oasis and drive across the dead and desolate stretch to the Jordan, whose tree-fringed course one can trace for many miles, a green, feathery thread -- winding through the arid plain. It bends in a complete right-angled turn at the traditional point where we stop--broad, heavily lined with trees on either bank, its waters are brown and thick with the soil that the Jordan's rapid descent from below Tiberias has torn from its mud banks.

Perhaps it was; at this ford that the hosts of Israel and afterwards Elijah passed over dry shod. The tradition of the centuries has it that here Jesus of Nazareth, offered Himself to John for baptism. Since the fourth century, the time of Constantine, it has been, considered a great, privilege to be baptized here. It is much visited at the Easter season by Greek pilgrims, whose white baptismal robes are afterwards carefully dried and put by for burial garments.

Leaving the bank of the Jordan we soon reach the shore of the Dead Sea. It lies sparkling in the sunlight like any other lake, but death lurks in those heavy waters. Fish of the Jordan carried too near by the swift current take one liquid breath and float, forever stilled, on the top of its ripples. Not even a vestige of slime is on its death-like shore: nothing organic is in its depths. There is a new, crude bath-house here built of unpainted, lumber, where dressing rooms and towels are available. You may, if you care to, bathe in this sea, and float about like a cork. Emperor Titus once as a test had several slaves bound in chains together and, cast into the water, but they were not drowned.

Some believe that under this moist shroud lie ruins never to be explored, the engulfed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Geologists, on the contrary, date this sea from the first ages of the world, yet agree that at some time, perhaps at the time of the destruction of these cities, some great and awful eruption occurring here caused the sea to suddenly overflow its banks. It is forty-seven miles long, and five to nine miles wide, and six and a half million tons of water flow into it each day to be carried off by evaporation, leaving behind the rich tribute of the Jordan -- potash, bromine, gypsum, magnesium chloride, and other salts.

Immense Wealth Lies Here

A great corporation, the imperial Chemical Industries of England, has the exclusive concession of this wealth in solution for twenty-five years, and figures are mentioned that the mind can not follow. This would make Palestine the richest small country in the world, yet the source of wealth, it is pointed out need not be a menace to her beauty, for the region is desolate, and no black smoke from high chimneys will pour forth to pollute the air. Electricity for heat and power and transportation may be had from the swift river, even now being harnessed just below the Sea of Galilee. But all this is of man's proposing, the disposing lies, as ever, in the hands of the great Master Planner, who has said through the Prophet Joel: "Fear not, O land: be **glad** and rejoice: for the **Lord** will do **great** things."

On the way back to Jerusalem we are again stopped at an important point by police sentry to give account of ourselves, then continue onward, winding through the hills higher and higher; the tall spires on the Mount of Olives marking our goal before us.

When the softly rounded hills have grown greener, up the gentle slope of one, near enough for clear detail, far enough to soften the picture, sharply outlined against the clear horizon of the hill, moves a shepherd slowly along, the white scarf of his bowed head bound and falling over the shoulders of the long white robe that trails the grass. And close behind, following on with uplifted heads as quietly as the master who leads the way, a long line of sheep, two and three abreast, shine silvery white in the late glow of the western sky. The picture I have so desired is mine; a beautiful, living illustration of those words of the Master, "My sheep know my voice and a stranger will they not follow."

Mount of Olives

Over the Brook Kidron and up the ascent of Olivet went King David 3,000 years ago, barefooted, head covered -- weeping bitter tears, over the rebellious son in Jerusalem. Ten centuries later the many prayers and tears of a Savior consecrated and dedicated its slopes forever to all Christian hearts, and later, over its crest hung the cloud that received the ascending Lord as He passed from the earthly gaze of His disciples forever, leaving them lonely and alone at the end of that last walk to Bethany. And so we, pilgrims of this far day, reverently and with thoughtful hearts, cross the Brook Kidron and ascend the Mount of Olives which stands, but a mile east of Jerusalem, a few minutes ride today in our motor car -- a "Sabbath day's journey" of the Scriptures. '

It has been said that the view from the Mount of Olives is worth going around the world to see, for from its top the eye follows a complete circle of the horizon within whose boundary lies so much of thrilling name and story.

The Greek Church and the Latin have both contributed their architecture as usual to mar its crest. On Ascension Day great crowds gather and services are held in the chapel built over the traditional spot from which Christ ascended, an impression resembling a footprint in the solid rock being shown as the mark of His foot as it left the earth.

We climb a stairway to the flat roof of one of these buildings and, looking eastward, our eyes travel downward and across to the Dead Sea, 3,900 feet below, and follow the valley of the Jordan, beyond which stands the misty,

dark mountains of Moab with their historic Mount Nebo. To the north, the Mountains of Benjamin are in view. To the south, the great wilderness of Judea reaches out to the fertile plains of Bethlehem and Hebron. To the west, is Jerusalem with its surrounding country and hills, and just across from where we stand, across the deep valley of the Kidron, flat and white behind the city wall that runs along the opposite slope, lies the great square of the Temple Area.

Some way this seems the view of all views in the Holy Land. Nothing else so stirs the emotions of the Christian as this sight of the Beloved City from the sacred Mount. No other experience brings the heart of the beholder so close to the Lord's life on ear earth, and a cry ringing down the long corridors of time, a cry in which infinite love, reproach, and sorrow lie blended, reaches and fills the heart until the lips almost give utterance -- "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee . . . Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." How desolate -- the great, silent platform of the Temple Area with the heavy dome of the mosque of Allah rising from its center, bears witness before us.

The Hebrew University

The Hebrew University is built upon Mount Scopus, which is really a continuation of the Mount of Olives. My visit there proves to be ill-timed. Sessions for the day are over and the oppressive quietness of the closed schoolroom hovers even about the campus. A young Jewish student appears, seemingly the only living thing about; and assures me that he has the time to show me through the buildings and would, be most glad to do so, but friends are waiting outside the gate in much of a hurry to get back to the city, and so I take time only to hurry out through the pine grove to see once again the wonderful, natural ampitheatre on the hillside, with its wide, open view down and across the great plain below to the Dead Sea, small from this great distance as it lies in its surrounding desolation like some blue jewel in a setting of old silver and on to the misty mountains of Moab beyond the Jordan dap. Stadium-like seats have been placed here, the gift of an American Jew.

There are some 250 students enrolled and good equipment. Post-graduates only were accepted at first, but now under-graduates also may matriculate. It was my good fortune when here five years ago to meet Dr. Magnes, its brilliant head. Classes were then in progress, although the masons were still at work and the building unfinished. Other Buildings have been added since then.

Excitement still runs high. in. Zionist circles because of a verbal and afterward printed protest by Dr. Magnes in which the wisdom of the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist desire for a political country is fearlessly questioned. He visions a spiritual and intellectual center established in Jerusalem for his people as the ideal hope and declares that nothing but trouble and bloodshed can result from the present program.

Jerusalem publishes two newspapers -- the Jewish organ issued daily and the weekly paper of the Arab. These are both printed in English.

Service is maintained between Jerusalem and other towns by motorbus. If these are not the comfortable and luxurious vehicles so much in use in our own country, they, no doubt, seem quite satisfactory to those concerned and in their stiff, rattling uncomfortableness may be glimpsed what might be

spoken of as a cross-section of that strange assortment which is Jerusalem -- the blue-gowned peasant woman returning from the market, the black-robed wife of the Arab fellaheen, the turbaned son of the desert, the orthodox Jew -- citizen of this land for the past hundred years -- broad of girth, with the emblem-like curl or long lock at each temple, while here and there the red fez, properly called "tarboosh," brings its happy note to the otherwise somber crowd.

Our Journey's End

Our stay in Palestine draws to its close, and one bright morning finds us in a coach speeding across the intervening stretch of "E'ritz Israel," as the Jews of all lands call it "Land of Israel," although one quarter of the population alone is of their race, for the name Palestine is after all Philistine in origin. We are traveling now through a part of the rich Plain of Sharon with its thick groves of fruit trees. In this section is Jaffa, noted for its oranges, and nearby is Teliviv, the new Jaffa, as it is called, a beautiful, modern, entirely Jewish city of beautiful buildings and wide boulevards, which sprang up in substantial yet mushroom-like growth from the movement known as Zionism.

In a small, triangular field, a camel drags a soil-turning plow, his step as measured and his head as high as though at the lead of some proud caravan he treads the desert sand; a little distance on, a great, clumsy ox with a tiny donkey at his side for a helpmeet moves awkwardly along plowed furrows. We are saying good-by to scenes that have been loved for the Land's sake--thrilling or commonplace, disappointing or satisfying, sad or amusing, simple, even to crudeness, the complete whole has been Palestine -- Land of Israel -- Land of the Book!

-- G. M. H.

PALESTINE

"Blest land of Judea! thrice hallowed of song;
Where the holiest of memories pilgrim-like throng;
In the shades of thy palms, by the shores of thy sea,
On the hills of thy beauty, my heart is with thee.

"With the eyes of a spirit I look on that shore,
Where the pilgrim and prophet have lingered before;
With the glide of a spirit I traverse the sod
Made bright by the steps of the angels of God.

"Blue sea of the hills--in my spirit I hear
The water, Genesaret, chime on my ear;
Where the Lowly and Just with the people sat down,
And thy spray on the dust of His sandals was thrown.

"Beyond are Bethulia's mountains of green,
And the desolate hills of the wild Gadarene;
And I pause on the goat-crag of Tabor to see
The gleam of thy waters, O dark Galilee!

"Lo, Bethlehem's hill-site below me is seen,
With the mountains around, and the valleys between;
There rested the shepherds of Judah, and there
The song of the angels rose sweet on the air.

"And Bethany's palm-trees in beauty still throw
Their shadows at noon on the ruins below;
But where are the sisters who hastened to greet
The lowly Redeemer, and sit at His feet.

"I tread where the twelve in their wayfaring trod,
I stand where they stood with the Chosen of God,
Where His blessing was heard and His lessons were taught,
Where the blind were restored and the healing was wrought.

"Oh, here with His flock the sad Wanderer came,
Those hills He toiled over in grief are the same,
The fountains where He drank by the wayside still flow,
And the same airs are blowing which breathed on His brow.

"And throned on her hills sits Jerusalem yet,
But with dust on her forehead, and chains on her feet;
For the crown of her pride to the mocker has gone,
And the holy Shechinah is dark, where it shone.

"But wherefore this dream of the earthly abode
Of Humanity clothed in the brightness of God?
Were my spirit but turned from the outward and dim,
It should gaze, even now, on the presence of Him.

"Not in clouds and in terrors, but gentle as when,
In love and in meekness, He moved among men;
And the voice which breathed peace to the waves of the sea
In the hush of my spirit would whisper to me!

"And what if my feet may not tread where He stood,
Nor my ears hear the dashing of Galilee's flood,
Nor my eyes see the cross which He bowed Him to bear,
Nor my knees press Gethsemane's garden of prayer.

"Yet, Loved of the Father, Thy Spirit is near,
To the meek, and the lonely, and penitent here;
And the voice of Thy love is the same even now
And at Bethany's tomb or on Olivet's brow.

"Oh, the outward hath gone! -- but in glory and power,
The Spirit surviveth the things of an hour;
Unchanged, undecaying, its Pentecost flame
On the heart's secret altar is burning the same!"

HALF HOUR MEDITATIONS ON ROMANS

No. 10

"From you sounded out the word of the Lord." -- 1 Thess. 1:8

GRACE to you and **peace** from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Such, we have seen, was the sweet benediction with which the Apostle closed his address, verse seven. To those among the beloved ones of God in Rome who were acquainted with the Old Testament writings it must have sounded as an echo of those comforting words with which Aaron had been instructed to bless Israel: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be **gracious** unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee **peace**." (Num. 6:24-26.) Only **now**, the music of those old-time words has mellowed; the awful majesty on high has been revealed by Jesus to be none other than our **Father**, from whose bosom the Only-begotten One came forth; and He has revealed that **grace** and **peace** will be multiplied towards us, yea, eternal life itself, as by faith we become ever better acquainted with the Father and Himself. (2 Pet. 1:2 ; John 17:3; John 1:18.) May **grace**, the active, redeeming love of God in Christ towards us, and **peace**, the sense of "profound calm and inward quiet which is communicated to the heart by the possession of reconciliation" be our blessed portion as we attend to the further words of our inspired guide.

First, I Thank My God

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often times I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." -- Rom. 1 :8-15.

"After greeting the believers at Rome, Paul declares his deep and long cherished interest in them." The address which we considered in our last meditation "had drawn a sort of **official** bond" between himself and them, which he feels the need of turning into a "**heart** relation." "Many thoughts arise, one after another in his mind. He tells us the first, but does not arrange the others in order. He pours forth all in one full stream of thought and feeling. Paul's first thought here, as in nearly all his epistles, is gratitude." "He has blessed the Roman Christians in the name of the Lord. Now he hastens to tell them how he blesses God for them, and how full his heart is of them. The Gospel is warm all through with life and love; this great message of doctrine and precept is poured from a fountain full of personal affection."

Love Rejoiceth with the Truth

It is probable that it did not occur to "our beloved Brother Paul" that in addition to the purpose which he had in mind, he was here furnishing the Church with a sublime illustration of "love rejoicing with the truth." (1 Cor. 13:6, margin.) Yet was not such the case? If ere were a group of Christians whose faith had come about independently from his labors. Does he rejoice the less because he had had no part in it? No indeed! He rejoices the more, for to him it is an indication that God is working not only through himself, but through others, and the feeling he displays is therefore one of thankfulness that in his great mission of spreading the joyful tidings God has provided help from (to him) unknown sources. "It has sometimes struck us as being one of the saddest fruits of schism in the Church, that it has begotten a kind of covetousness of truth and love. Christians hold their favorite doctrines as a sort of spiritual monopoly; loving truth for the distinction it may give to them, as the miser loves his gold, instead of loving it for the blessing and joy it may bring to others when imparted. To find the highest help in communion we must be willing to give all we have without stint; and to take from all who have acquired any riches of truth, however remote and out of ecclesiastical fellowship with us they may be." Ah! ! Paul, once again, we thank God for you, and for giving us, all unconsciously, perhaps, though none the less effectively, this lesson in love. God help us ever thus to rejoice with the truth **wherever found**.

My God

"**My God**"; a phrase used, in the New Testament, only by St. Paul, except that one utterance of Eli, Eli, by his dying Savior. It is the expression of an indescribable appropriation and reverent intimacy. The believer grudges his God to none ; he rejoices with great joy over every soul that finds its wealth in Him. But at the center of all joy and love is this -- '**my God**'; 'Christ Jesus **my Lord**'; who loved **me** and gave Himself for **me**. Is it selfish? Nay, it is the language of a personality where Christ has dethroned self in His own favor, but in which therefore reigns now the highest happiness, the happiness which animates and maintains a self forgetful love of all. And this holy intimacy, with its action in thanks and petition; is all the while '**through Jesus Christ**.' . . . The man, knows God as '**my God**', and deals with Him as such, never out of that Beloved Son who is equally one with the believer and with the Father, no alien medium, but the living point of unity."

Your Faith is Spoken of

"**Your faith**," says another, "not your verbal disputations, nor your questionings, nor your syllogisms."

"What increases Paul's joy is, that not only do they believe themselves, but their faith, the report of which is spread everywhere, opens a way for the Gospel to other countries." "Go where he will, in Asia, in Macedonia, in Achaia, in Illyricum, he meets believing 'strangers from Rome,' with spiritual news from the Capital, announcing. With glad solemnity, that at the great center of this world the things eternal are proving their power, and that the Roman mission is remarkable for its strength and simplicity of '**faith**,' its humble reliance on the Lord Jesus, Christ, and loving allegiance to Him." "Such faith must surely have made itself known by works of faith." Happy, happy, Christians, those in Rome to whom Paul wrote. What a glow of holy

joy must have been theirs as they listened to these high praises from an inspired Apostle's pen! It must have been to them as a foretaste of .that "Well done" only the Master can say; that "Well done" which He yet will say to those who overcome at last.

Giving Praise Worthily

Another lesson we may learn from the Apostle ere we leave this passage is the propriety of speaking a word of commendation, when it is merited. The impression obtains in some quarters that no matter how much we may feel another has merited our love and esteem, we should never make any such admission in his presence. To do so, it is held, might have the effect of making him heady, and thus our well-intentioned words might prove to be a snare. We would agree that idle words of flattery uttered in insincerity might so prove, but sincere words of appreciation kindly expressed to those who merit them, can only inspire to still nobler achievement. One of the deepest thinkers this world has ever produced, whose writings show a remarkable understanding of and deep reverence for the Word of God, once wrote: "You may sum the duty of your life in the giving of praise worthily, and being yourselves worthy of it."

Paul's Prayer-Life

"For God is . . . my witness . . . that without ceasing I make mention of you . . . in my prayers." A few paragraphs back we noted the fact that the faith of these Christians in Rome had come about independently from Paul's labors, and we observed the joy he experienced in their faith, notwithstanding the fact that he had had no part in it. But in another sense from the one which we were then considering, Paul had had a very real part in it. He had been "co-operating by prayer." (2 Cor. 1:11: Diaglott.) Usually the first conception one gets of St. Paul is that of a man of almost ceaseless **activity** in the service of the Lord; of one whose first inquiry was "Lord what wilt thou have me to **do**?" of one who "**labored** more, abundantly than they all." But when we reflect upon the **quality** of those labors, it becomes at once apparent that they must have been after all merely the outward manifestation of a hidden life of prayer of which only God was witness. Small wonder that when he heard the report of their faith spreading everywhere he "first" thanked God. Such a report ,was God's answer to his own prayers.

"The prayers of St. Paul are a study by themselves. See his own accounts of them, to the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians, and Philemon. Observe their topic; it is almost always the growth of grace in the saints, to the Master's glory. Observe now still more their manner; the frequency, the diligence, the resolution which grapples, wrestles, with the difficulties of prayer, so that in Col. 2:1 he calls prayer simply '**a great wrestling.**' Learn here how to deal with God for those for whom you work, shepherd of souls, messenger of the Word, Christian man or woman who in any way are called to help other hearts in Christ." "It was a remark of General Gordon's that it makes a great difference in our feeling towards a stranger if before we meet him we have prayed for him. " And we may with equal truth say that it makes a great difference in the feelings of others towards us if they have reason to believe that we have prayed for them."

God . . . Whom I Serve

Scholars tell us that the Greek word here translated "serve" contains at once the thought of adoration and obedience, and suggests not ordinary, but priestly service. Indeed, Weymouth's translation reads: "God . . . to whom I render priestly and spiritual service." We shall meet the word again more than once in this epistle, and have opportunity of noting from the contexts this very evident meaning, particularly in that much loved passage, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice; holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable **service**." (Rom. 12 :1.) Your rational religious service (Diaglott); that is to say "service which rationally corresponds to the moral premises contained in the faith which you profess." This priestly service Paul renders to God, he says, "**in the gospel of His Son**"; that is to say, in its furtherance, its proclamation, its propagation. Frequently he speaks of the Gospel in this sense, as for instance in Phil. 2:22: "But ye know the proof of him (Timotheus), that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" Moreover, St. Paul serves God in that glorious ministry "**in his spirit**." The service of the ancient priests, might be only outward and mechanical; but the preaching of the Gospel was a sacrifice offered to God by Paul with his whole love, will, and mind. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must, worship Him in spirit and in truth." -- John 4:24.

If the Lord Will

Careful for nothing, persevering in prayer, a lively sense of gratitude at all times welling up in his heart; the Apostle makes his requests known unto God. "In this case his prayers have a very definite direction: he is **requesting, if somehow, now at length my way shall be opened, in the will of God, to come to you**. It is a quite simple, quite natural petition. His inward harmony with the Lord's will never excludes the formation and expression of such requests, with the reverent 'if' of submissive reserve. The 'indifference' of mystic pietism, which at least discourages articulate contingent petitions, is unknown to the Apostles; 'in everything, with thanksgiving, they make their requests known unto God.' And they find such expression harmonized, in a holy experience, with a profound rest '**within** this will,' this 'sweet, beloved will of God.'" "In the will of God' implies submission. But submission did not prevent earnest, persevering prayer. Paul had a will of his own ; and his will was to go to Rome. As yet, God's will was unknown. And Paul will not act till it becomes evident that what he desires is also the will of God. He also remembers that the opening of a way for him, depends, not upon circumstances, but upon God." "Little did he here foresee **how** his way would be opened; that it would lie through the tumult in the temple, the prisons of Jerusalem and Caesarea, and the cyclone of the Adrian sea. He had in view a missionary journey to Spain, in which Rome was to be taken by the way.

'So God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes ways and times His own.'

That I may Impart to You some Spiritual Gift

"His heart yearns for this Roman visit. We may almost render the Greek of the next clause, **For I am homesick for a sight of you**; he uses the word by which elsewhere he describes Philippian Epaphroditus' longing to be back at Philippi (Phil. 2:26), and again his own longing to see the son of his heart, Timotheus. (2 Tim. 1:4.) Such is the Gospel, that its family affection throws

the light of home on even unknown regions where dwell 'the brethren.' In this case the longing love however has a purpose most practical; **that I may impart to you some spiritual gift of grace, with a view to your establishment.** The word rendered 'gift of grace' is used in some places (see especially 1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31) with a certain special reference to the mysterious 'Tongues,' 'Interpretations,' and 'Prophecies,' given in the primeval churches. And we gather from the Acts and the Epistles that these grants were not . . . made where an Apostle was not there to lay on his hands. But it is not likely that this is the import of this present passage. Elsewhere in the Epistle (5:15; 5:16; 6:23) the word is used with its largest and deepest reference; God's gift of blessing in Christ; Chapter 12, verse 6 is the only passage that at all looks the other way, and that passage implies that the Romans **already** possessed the wonder-working gifts. Here then, so we take it, he means that he pines to convey to them, as his Lord's messenger, some new development of spiritual light and joy; to expound 'the Way' to them more perfectly; to open up to them such fuller and deeper insights into the riches of Christ that they, better using their possession of the Lord, might as it were gain new possessions in Him, and might stand more boldly on the glorious certainties they held."

He that Watereth Shall be Watered also Himself

"And this [their strengthening] was to be done ministerially: not magisterially: For he goes on to say that the longed-for visit would be his gain as well as theirs; **that is, with a view to my concurrent encouragement among you, by our mutual faith, yours and mine together.** Shall we call this a sentence of fine tact; beautifully conciliatory and endearing? Yes, but it is also perfectly sincere. True tact is only the skill of sympathetic love, not the less genuine in its thought because that thought seeks to please and win. He is glad to show himself as his disciples' brotherly friend ; but then he first is such, and enjoys the character, and has continually found and felt his own soul made strong and glad by the witness to the Lord which far less gifted believers bore, as he and they talked together. Does not every true teacher know this in his own experience? If we are not merely lecturers on Christianity but witnesses for Christ, we know what it is to hail with deep thanksgivings the 'encouragement' we have had from the lips of those who perhaps believed, long after we did, and have been far less advantaged outwardly than we have been. . . . 'Mutual faith,' the pregnant phrase of the Apostle, faith residing in each of both parties, and owned by each to the other, is a mighty power for Christian 'encouragement' still."

Commenting on this passage another remarks: "Is not the strengthening of others the means of encouraging himself? One shares in the strength which he imparts. The Apostle seems to say that there is in his desire as much holy selfishness as holy zeal. The substitution of the word **encouragement** [Authorized Version "comfort"] in speaking of Paul; for that of **strengthen** [Authorized Version "established"] in speaking of them, is significant. In Paul's case, the only thing in question is his subjective feeling, which might be a little depressed, and which would receive a new impulse from the success of his work among them; compare Acts 28:15. 'When Paul saw [the brethren] he thanked God, and took courage.' . . . It is because they live in this common atmosphere of one and the same faith that they can act and react spiritually, he on them, and they on him. What dignity, tact, and grace in these words, by which the Apostle at once transforms the active part which he is obliged to ascribe to himself in the first place, into a receptive part, and

so to terminate with the notion which unites these two points of view, that of reciprocity in the possession of a common moral life!"

That I Might Have Some Fruit

"His readers might ask with some reason how it happened that Paul, having been an apostle for more than twenty years, had not yet found time to come and preach the good news in the Capital of the world." He therefore explains: "**Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that often times I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also.**" In this verse (13) Paul passes "from the spiritual good which he has always desired to do among the believers of Rome to the extension of their church, to which he hopes he may contribute." "He cannot help giving more and yet more intimation of his loving **gravitation** towards them; nor yet of his gracious avarice for '**fruit**', result, harvest and vintage for Christ, in the way of helping on Romans, as well as Asiatics, and Macedonians, and Achaians, to live a fuller life in Him. This we may infer from the whole Epistle, would be the chief kind of 'fruit' in his view at Rome; but not this only. For we shall see him at once go on to anticipate an evangelistic work at Rome, a speaking of the Gospel Message where there would be a temptation to be 'ashamed' of it. Edification of believers may be his main aim. But conversion of pagan souls to God cannot possibly be dissociated from it."

"Let his work at Corinth and Ephesus be remembered; why should he not accomplish a similar work at Rome? . . . This is what he calls **gathering some fruit**. The phrase is as modest as possible. At Corinth and Ephesus he gathered full harvests; at Rome, where the Church already exists, he will merely add **some handfuls** of ears to the sheaves already reaped by others."

"In passing we see, with instruction, that St. Paul made many plans which came to nothing; he tells us this here without apology or misgiving. He claims accordingly no such practical omniscience, actual or possible, as would make his resolutions and forecasts infallible. Tacitly, at least, he wrote 'f the Lord will' across them all, unless indeed there came a case where, as when he was guided out of Asia to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10) direct intimation was given him, abnormal, supernatural quite **ab extra**, that such and not such was to be his path."

The Glorious Gospel . . . Committed to My Trust

"But now, he is not only '**homesick**' for Rome, with a yearning love; he feels his obligation to Rome, with a wakeful conscience. **Alike to Greeks and to Barbarians, to wise men and to unthinking I am in debt**. Mankind is on his heart, in the sorts and differences of its culture. On the one hand were '**the Greeks**'; that is to say, in the then popular meaning of the word, the peoples possessed of what we now call 'classical' civilization, Greek and Roman; an inner circle of these were '**the wise**;' the literati, the readers, writers, thinkers, in the curriculum of those literatures and philosophies. On the other hand were '**the Barbarians**' the tongues and tribes outside the Hellenic pale, Pisidian, Pamphylian, Galilaian Illyrian, and we know not who besides; and then among them, or anywhere, '**the unthinking**' the numberless masses whom the educated would despise or forget as utterly untrained in the schools, unversed in the great topics of man and the world; the people of the field, the market, and the kitchen. To the Apostle, because to his Lord, all these were now impartially his claimants, his creditors; he '**owed them**' the

Gospel which had been trusted to him for them. Naturally, his will might be repelled alike by the frown or smile of the Greek, and by the coarse earthliness of the Barbarian. But supernaturally, in Christ, he loved both, and scrupulously remembered his **duty** to both. Such is the true missionary spirit still, in whatever region, under whatever conditions. The Christian man, and the Christian Church, delivered from the world, is yet its debtor. 'Woe is to him, to it, if that debt is not paid, if that Gospel is 'hidden in a napkin.'"

I Am Ready

"Thus he is ready, and more than ready, to pay his debt to Rome. **So** (to render literally) **what relates to me is eager, to you too. to the men in Rome, to preach the Gospel.** 'What relates to me'; there is an emphasis on 'me', as if to say that the hindrance, whatever it is, is not in him, but around him. The doors have been shut, but the man stands behind them, in act to pass in when he may.

"His eagerness is no light-heartedness, no carelessness of when or where. This wonderful missionary is too sensitive to facts and ideas, too rich in imagination, not to feel the peculiar, nay the awful greatness, of a summons to Rome. He understands culture too well not to feel its possible obstacles. He has seen too much of both the real grandeur and the harsh force of the imperial power in its extension not to feel a genuine awe as he thinks of meeting that power at its gigantic Center. There is in him that which fears Rome. But he is therefore the very man to go there, for he understands the magnitude of the occasion, and he will the more deeply retire upon his Lord for peace and power."

"JESUS CHRIST MAKETH THEE WHOLE"

THE STORY OF TWO MIRACLES

*"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders,
and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit,
according to His own will." --Heb. 2:4: Acts 9:32-43.*

INTERESTING INDEED must have been the age or period of miracles in the early career of the Church, such as special Divine healing of life-long diseases, and the awakening of the dead. That such miracles were potent factors in the establishment of Christianity there can be no question whatever. None can dispute the miraculous character of the work done and the quickening effect these special gifts had in the Church. Hence, miraculous works became the occasion of the attention of many being called to the Gospel message, who otherwise may never have heard of it.

Most obviously these special gifts of Divine healing were not intended to continue generally throughout the Church's career as in the Apostolic period, for as the Apostle indicates, the time was to come when these gifts were to "vanish away"; the Apostles alone having the power to impart these gifts to others, with the passing of the first century there would be very little of these supernatural works going on in the Church. What we find in history confirms this view of the matter also. There is no record that special miracles, Divine healing, etc., continued to be the general order in the Church as it was in the Apostolic period.

Healing Sin-sick and Spiritually Lame More Important

Some who appear to attach too much importance to the gifts of physical healing, etc., overlook the real lesson and import of these supernatural exhibitions of the Lord's power -- that they were intended to prepare the way for and call attention to the more important work of healing the sin-sick and spiritually lame and maimed; for after all, these are the real diseases that are at the bottom of all human ailments and suffering. A man might be quickly relieved of physical pain, but if his heart be not touched by a proper conviction of sin and an appreciation of the Divine message so as to produce conversion and reformation, his physical healing counts for nothing. Consequently we find the real and important ministry of those who were appointed to be spiritual guides in the early Church was such as to affect the inner man, to cleanse from sin, and to accomplish the development of character. None can fail to grasp this fact in the reading and studying of the many inspired lessons of the New Testament.

But though the age of miracles is gone, so far as the Church in the flesh is concerned, yet we may still derive encouragement and assistance to our faith by the consideration of the accounts of these miraculous healings in the primitive Church, and in observing how the Lord's special providence operated to establish and protect the, Church in those days.

Two very wonderful miracles were performed by the Apostle Peter in the western part of Palestine; at the two places known in those days as Lydda and Joppa. Full of the evangelical spirit, the Apostle was journeying from place to place, "And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda." It is said that "Lydda was a large village or small city near Joppa, a day's (about twenty-four miles) journey northwest of Jerusalem. Its ancient name was Lod, and its modern name is Ludd." It may be asked, How came there to be saints in Lydda? having no record of these before. The suggestion is offered that "when Philip left the converted Ethiopian we were told that 'he was found at Azotus; ; and passing through he preached the Gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.' Lydda was between Azotus and Caesarea and lay in the track of Philip's preaching. This explains how there came to be saints there."

Spirit in the Heart Breaks Power of Sin

It is said that the Apostle "found a certain man named Aeneas, ,who had kept his bed eight year's; for he was sick of the Palsy." St. Peter addressed him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him and they turned to the Lord."

We are not told that he was one of the saints; the presumption, therefore, is that he was not, but that at most he was a friend to some of them, and that thus the Apostle's attention was drawn to him.. The fact that he had been bedfast, helpless, eight years, testified that the healing was a miracle. Its fame spread abroad, and resulted, we are told, in the drawing of many unto the Lord and to the Church. Though the record does not tell us that Aeneas became a believer or one of the saints, it would be a reasonable supposition that he would be responsive to this special manifestation of the Lord's grace, by becoming a consecrated believer, and that consequently it may have been because of his personal influence that the power of the Truth spread so rapidly in those parts. No doubt it was the Divine :mention that those

experiencing the grace of the Lord so marvelously were to go forth and were to make it known to others, as so well expressed in the words, "Go and tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee."

Though we cannot now report to our friends and neighbors special healings of the body, we can make known to them what great things the Lord hath done for us in the matter of forgiveness of sin and the power of His grace in our hearts, enabling us to live a different life from the world in general and to experience peace and joy that the world can neither give nor take away. It is an actual fact experienced by thousands of people, as one has remarked, "that His Spirit in the heart does break the power of sin, forgive its guilt and give peace, cleanse away its vileness and bring purity and joy. But Christ's healing virtue must flow through the channel of the human will; His grace works in us only as we work it out."

Thus did the Lord establish the Church and attract to it those who were in the right attitude of heart, using miracles then, as He now uses other means.

"This Woman Was Full of Good Works"

The Apostle journeyed on to Joppa and here we find even a more marvelous demonstration of Divine power; it was the awakening of one who had actually gone into the sleep of death. One of the disciples, that is, one of the saints, residing at Joppa, on the seacoast, was apparently a woman of means and education, and if her name represented her appearance, she was very beautiful. Tabitha, in the Syriac language, Dorcas, in the Greek, signifies graceful, beautiful. But this woman was famed for a beauty and a grace entirely separate and distinct from whatever she possessed of these qualities naturally. Hers was the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit, full of love and helpfulness. She was a burning and shining light for the Lord in that vicinity, evidently. She was not "a Bible reader," for there were no Bibles in the language of the people at that time. She was not a tract distributor nor a colporteur, for there was no printing done then; but she did what she could; she served the Lord, his brethren, and all needing help, according to the best opportunities afforded her. She helped the poor, and particularly widows, who as a class at that time were apt to be in a very trying position, especially if poor. Dorcas had been in the habit (the Greek text indicates) of assisting the poor with garments, etc., probably, almost certainly, assisting them also with words of encouragement and helpfulness, and ministering to them the Truth. Under these circumstances it is not strange that her death should have produced sorrow, especially amongst the beneficiaries of her charities, and amongst the numerous friends which a beautiful Christlike spirit of this kind is sure to make. Evidently this woman had come to appreciate the fact, as expressed by another, "that the more good we do to others, the more goodness we have in ourselves. She was a producer whose work made the world richer, and was not simply an idle consumer. Dorcas is one of the minor characters of the Bible, but she has perpetuated her memory and work in many spiritual daughters, and she, being dead, yet sews garments for the poor."

All the Church Martyrs of Jesus

While it is very true that the civilized conditions of the present time take from us many of the opportunities possessed by Dorcas, by supplying means of employment for poor widows, and others indigent, and by providing County Homes, etc., for the needy, nevertheless, all who have the spirit of

the Lord, which Dorcas had, and which she so nobly exemplified, will surely still find opportunities for laying, down their lives, some way or other, in the service of the household of faith. As the Apostle says, "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16.) Some one, has suggested that possibly Dorcas was a martyr -- that her death probably resulted from her service to others. A Christian poet has said of such as she:

"These, though their names appear not on the scroll
Of Martyrologists, laid down their lives
No less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes --
For His dear brethren's sake -- watching the couch
Of loathsome sickness or of slow decay,
Or visiting the captive in his cell,
Or struggling with a burden not their own,
Until their weary life sinks slow, away,
These, too, are martyrs, brother."

Every one of the Lord's saints should be recognized in his neighborhood as of generous heart, of kindly impulses; whether he have dollars to give, or only pennies. Of kind words at least he should be noted as a giver, remembering that it is more blessed, and more God-like, to give than to receive.

Today, as the traveler passes from Joppa, going toward Jerusalem, the guide shows him on the outskirts of Joppa, at the side of the public road, a large, and at one time very beautiful and costly, monument to Dorcas. It is a fountain at which many weary ones have refreshed themselves. The narrative of Dorcas' good works and Christlikeness, like the waters of a fountain, have come down the rugged channel of the centuries, encouraging, refreshing, and stimulating God's people all the way. Nevertheless, quite probably some in her day spoke evil of her; perhaps even some who were the recipients of her favors may have declared that she performed her charities that she might glory in them, and to be seen and known of men, rather than for the love of those to whom she ministered; and such may be our experience, as we seek to do good unto all men as we have opportunity. But the fact that good may be evil spoken of must not deter us. We seek to please the Lord, and to cultivate in our hearts His spirit, and to exemplify this spirit before others, thus letting our light shine; this is our only proper course, whatever may be said of it by the skeptical world, or an envious class of "tares." We are to seek chiefly the approval of our Father and our Bridegroom -- to be content therewith, and to be content with nothing less.

An Enduring Monument

Apparently Dorcas took sick and died suddenly, at about the time that others of the saints at Joppa heard of Peter's being at Lydda and the cure performed there. They sent for him immediately; probably with no thought of his performing such a miracle as to bring Dorcas back to life; but rather with the thought that they had lost a highly esteemed member of their little group, and that Peter could give them some consolation at this time. There was no telegraph or telephone or mail service, then, and some of the brethren became the messengers to take the word to Peter, to request his presence; and that he would not delay. In the city of Jerusalem a corpse must be buried the same day, but in the smaller cities and villages they might remain as many as three days' unburied. Peter's presence was wanted without delay, before Dorcas would be buried; and he went at once.

An affecting scene was before Peter as they entered the death-chamber. Poor widows and others were lamenting the loss of their friend, and showing the garments which she had made for them. That surely was a noble tribute to the usefulness of her life. No millionaire has ever left monuments which will endure so long, or which will reflect so much glory upon his character, as were left by this humble woman. And even the humblest and poorest of us may to some extent emulate this example and leave some such monuments of love and testimonies of appreciation behind us when we die. It is a sad end when any, especially of those who have named the name of Christ, die and leave none who sincerely, truly, mourn for them and miss them. It testifies to a life that was either selfish or misunderstood. We who are looking forward to the close of our earthly journey, and that before very long, should see to it that our lives are spent day by day in such a manner that some will be the happier for them; and that our decease will be recognized .by some, at least, as a loss.

There is a Ministry of Evil

We read that the Apostle "Peter kneeled down and prayed:" It may have been during this prayer that the conviction came to him of what was going to take place. "Prayer is a wonderful means of bringing light into the mind and power into the will. Peter energized his prayer, he put his will into it, he threw his will into the channel of God's will, and then it had 'great force.'" "And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up." "If this miracle were a an invention or a myth," says one, "we would expect to find these pages sprinkled with such wonders. Their scarcity in the narratives is evidence that the writers reported only what they saw or knew. And why should we doubt that God can raise the dead?"

Peter's most notable miracle was the bringing of Dorcas back from the portals of death. Like the other miracle, it was peculiar to that time, and for the special purpose of the establishment of the Church. We are not to suppose that it was the Lord's intention that all of His people during this Gospel Age should be thus snatched back from death, nor that they should be all relieved from beds of sickness, nor that they should all have powers such as the Apostle here exercised. There is a ministry of evil -- of calamity; sickness, death, etc., which has often been valuable indeed to the Lord's people, inculcating various lessons and developing various fruits of the spirit, meekness, patience, gentleness, etc. Let us after consecrating our all to the Lord, and while using our consecrated all as wisely as we know how; accept whatever Divine wisdom shall mete out to us. Let us remember our Lord's words "The cup which my Father hath given [poured for] Me, shall I not drink it?" -- John 18:11.

"THAT YE PUT NO YOKE OF BONDAGE UPON ANY"

PERSONAL LIBERTY of thought, of conscience, and of decision as to truth, and individual freedom in the matter of rejecting what one believes to be error and in accepting what is believed to be truth, are surely the heritage of every disciple of Christ. Such a heritage was committed to the Church in the Apostolic period; and the Apostle Paul's admonition to individual believers was characteristic of the liberty given the primitive Church" "Prove

all things, hold fast that which is good." Such liberty of judgment and decision was to constitute the basis for the oneness and unity that the Apostle admonished the brethren to preserve in their midst.

From the commencement of this association some twelve years ago, the Apostolic standard of liberty has been constantly held up to view; this we have been impressed to do in consideration of the injurious results recorded in Church history that have come because of neglect of the advice and instruction on liberty given the Church in the beginning of her history. In accordance with this procedure we have urged upon all the readers of this journal to exercise careful scrutiny, and to use their individual liberty and judgment in the acceptance or rejection of what is herein presented. And here we take occasion again to express a word of caution with regard to overstressing certain lines of thought and of making tests in the Church of items and matters that are not fundamental to our faith and fellowship. There are those questions and items concerning which there is room for a difference of opinion; amongst these are thoughts relating to the Presence of Christ; manner and time of the change of the Church; chronology; and points relating to the subject of the Mediator, Sin-offering, Covenants, etc. On all such there is to be accorded full individual liberty of understanding.

There was recently published in these pages a contributed article on the New Covenant; this article was published believing that the discussion of the theme was profitable. And while it is our conviction that the views presented in this article are well supported by the Scriptures, we would not be understood as desiring to make these views a test of fellowship amongst the brethren, or grounds for a division. Other brethren there are who hold views quite divergent from those presented in the article above mentioned, and who, we doubt not, are just as sincere in their convictions; and, it is equally their liberty to hold the opinions they do and to present them to others as they have opportunity. It is again a matter of Christian tolerance that we are urging upon all, and admonishing that the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, be given such free course as that the kindness and benevolence of our Lord may so prevail in the precincts of God's people that there may be no schism or strife over points of teaching that do not involve our fellowship in Christ and our hope of the glory to follow. We are impressed in this connection to submit once more some very helpful suggestions that were published by Brother Russell in 1913, under the following subject:

"Doctrines More or Less Important"

"There are certain features of the doctrine of Christ which are fundamental and indispensable, and without which none would be recognized of the Lord as one of His followers. There are other features which would seem to be useful, helpful, blessed, but not fundamental -- not essential -- to membership in the Body of Christ. The fundamentals have been enjoyed by good, saintly ones from the Day of Pentecost until now.

"We, the same class now, have the same fundamentals, and are permitted to have other privileges, truths, 'meat in due season,' for our strengthening. These latter are not necessarily essential to our membership in the Body of Christ; otherwise our forefathers who did not have them would not have been members of Christ, and there would have been no Christ Body for centuries.

"The fundamental theory of the Atonement is as follows

"(1) All men--all of sinners.

"(2) None can be reconciled to God without a Redeemer's sacrifice.

"(3) Jesus came into the world to be that Sacrifice-and later to apply that Ransom-price for the sins of the world.

"(4) On the basis of faith in the Redeemer's work, the believer may consecrate himself to the Divine service, in acceptance of the Divine invitation, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifices.'

"(5) So doing, the believer. May -- up to the time of the completion of the Elect number -- exercise full assurance of faith that his sacrifice will be accepted of the Father; and that he will receive a share of the anointing of the Holy Spirit -- the begetting.

"(6) Such as meet these conditions are to be accepted as brethren in the highest sense of the term.

This much would seem to have been always necessary, and more than this we believe is not necessary today. But if by reason of our favorable day we have more knowledge, we may also have corresponding trials, which our greater knowledge will offset.

"Our advice to the Lord's clear people everywhere is that they put no yoke upon each other, beyond the fundamentals specified above-that otherwise they stand free, and leave each other free, and fellowship and agree as much as they can with each other:

"If there be a disposition to crowd each other on more than this basic faith; and if it be considered necessary to separate in order to the progress of either of the parties, then doubtless rather, than a continual contention a separation would be the wise course.

"We are not criticizing the views of any one. Each has a perfect right to hold whatever he believes the Bible to teach, and our views are doubtless well known to all of our readers. Briefly stated, they are as follows

"(1) That the one that sinned was Adam, and that he and all his posterity were involved.

"(2) That a Redeemer was necessary, that Jesus became that Redeemer, and 'gave Himself á Ransom for all.'

"(3) That God has invited some of the redeemed sinners -- not to be the Ransom-price, nor to redeem anybody else, but to be associates of the Redeemer, members of His Body, His Bride.

"(4) The terms and conditions upon which these play have fellowship are that Jesus as the great Advocate shall accept them as His members -- their flesh as His flesh -- and that He shall impute to them the share of His merit which would be coming to them as members of the Adamic race. Then they are legally justified from all the shortcomings, weaknesses, and imperfections inherited by them; and their own wills and all their remaining powers and talents being consecrated, their sacrifice may be acceptable to God -- as part of the Sin-Offering by the great High Priest.

"(5) Sharing thus in the Redeemer's death, these are privileged to share in His life, by the First Resurrection. The Redeemer does not now make application of His merit to the world, aside from the newly-accepted and added members. He will carry out the Divine program, and sacrifice all His members before presenting, at the end of the Age, the merit of His sacrifice

on behalf of the sills of the whole world, and will thereby seal the New Covenant for them.

"In our judgment many err in attaching too much value to the Church's sacrifice; whereas other dear brethren err, we think, in that they do not see any value in the Church's sacrifice, nor that she is permitted a share in the Master's sacrificing at all. To us it seems like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other; whereas our view lies in the center, as we have stated the matter ."

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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THE WISDOM OF GOD'S MORE EXCELLENT WAYS

"Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscanot, who also betrayed Him." -- Matt. 10:2-4.

Oh how inexhaustible are God's resources and God's wisdom and God's knowledge! How impossible it is to search His decrees or trace His footsteps! So writes the Apostle after he as reviewed the dealings of God with favored ones of both Jewish and Gentile peoples. (Rom. 11:33). Well does he recognize that much of God's ways of doing things lies beyond the comprehension of human wisdom, but when His plans unfold, they reveal a far-sighted wisdom that elicits our fervent praise. Through the Prophet God has also said, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And perhaps nowhere is the distinction between God's ways and ours more clearly revealed than in the calling of the twelve men whose names are furnished us in the above texts.

Jesus was about to launch into His great public work, and as a preliminary feature of that work, He sent forth His twelve specially chosen Apostles fully commissioned and instructed as to how they should proceed to carry forward His work. They are to be His representatives, His special associates or colleagues in furthering the proclamation of the Gospel, temporarily confining their ministry to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but eventually extending it to all nations. In a sense He constituted them His cabinet of executive agents, definitely elected to that position for the period of the Gospel Age, each being individually chosen, and their respective positions assigned them by the Lord himself.

God Hath Chosen the Weak Things

To the human mind, in the selection of a body of men for such responsible positions, it would seem to make that choice from the ranks of the great, the learned and influential. The need would seem to call for men gifted with the talents of statesmanship, endowed with power to sway the masses, or

possessed of the organizing abilities that would gather the latent forces into one concerted effort. Such would be the material selected by human wisdom for such a cabinet. His choice was made from among the lower walks of life. He called men from occupations and environments that to the worldly wise utterly unfitted them for any great public work. Moreover, He seems not to have chosen twelve of the most brilliant men that might have been found even on this lower strata. Here again He sets human opinion and wisdom aside. An unbiased classification of the twelve men finally chosen would acknowledge that perhaps not more than four or five of them were gifted with any special brilliancy. Very few of them ever gained any particular prominence in after-days.

If we single out Peter, James, and John, and perhaps Matthew, from the original twelve, we have comparatively little knowledge of the rest, with the exception of Judas, whose tragic end has been given considerable space in the record. Of some of them we know nothing at all, except that they were numbered with the twelve Apostles. The verdict of human opinion would be, "What a weak and inefficient set of men to put in charge of a work so possible of expansion and success." But God hath chosen to weak and foolish to confound the mighty, and He has so arranged His plans, and so wisely selected His instruments, that no flesh may glory in His sight. When all the minutia of his oftentimes mysterious ways is fully revealed, the universal acclaim will be,

"His Plan is wise, and just, and good,
The wondrous work well done."

A careful study of the characters of the Twelve, or as many of them as we know anything about, will reveal a deep wisdom in their selection that might be very easily overlooked. Jesus, as we have seen, did not specially select orators, diplomats, statesmen, etc., but He did something vastly more important. He chose twelve very representative characters. He came into the world to save men, all kinds of men, and out of all conditions, and in selecting these twelve disciples He has accomplished two ends. He fitted vessels so that by them a witness might be given to His life, death, and resurrection, and in them He has demonstrated what He can do in any heart fully committed to Him. To us therefore what Jesus did with these men is of as great importance as the knowledge of the work He has done by them.

In studying these characters let us make a hurried survey of the four Gospels, and piecing together the various incidents recorded we may find much to comfort our own hearts, and it may be that we shall find our own peculiar trait of character so clearly portrayed that we will not fail to apply the reproof or the encouragement specially intended for us.

"Thou Art Peter"

In the records of these men we are not left any ground for dispute as to who should rank first in our consideration. The Lord Himself has settled that for us by the position that Peter occupies in the narratives of all the Gospel writers. In Matthew 10:2 we read, "Now the names of the twelve Apostles were these: -- **first**, Simon called Peter." With a consistency that is more than accidental Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all give Peter this position. No other name is constant in the order given except that of Peter. All three put Peter first and Judas last. As we shall see later, John does not give the names of the

Twelve, neither does he repeat the familiar phrase, "Peter, James, and John," and this omission is apparently more than accidental also.

Peter was destined to be a leader, and apparently this was more or less recognized by the others. In various ways they consented to it by looking to him as a sort of spokesman. His force of character, his readiness for action, and his impetuous disposition must put him in the front line of action. For this reason his deeds and words are more fully recorded than any of the others. No disciple made so many blunders, none but he ever presumed to contradict the Master, and none were ever so sharply reproved as he. One moment he is worthy of praise and approval, in the next he is deserving of scathing rebuke. In temperament he was of the most sanguine character, full of confidence and self-assurance -- a trait that must necessarily involve him in many difficulties until it has been properly trained. He was ready to fight for and die with Jesus, under the spell of his fiery enthusiasm, and under changed circumstances was just as quick to deny Him, even with curses.

Such is the Peter that our first glance reveals -- a man in whom thousands have seen their own weaknesses displayed, and for whom they have felt a very deep kinship of spirit. Yes, Peter was truly a representative man. Everything was out of place with him but his heart, and that was the saving quality he possessed. He stands therefore as a testimony of what Jesus can do with a loyal devoted heart. Let the lump be ever so unsightly, and the jewel ever so deeply imbedded in the mass, He will bring it out to reflect all its beauties, if only He can have His way as fully, and as unhindered as He did in the life of Simon Peter.

Diversity Necessary in the Church

The Church has needed its Peters, and some of its greatest leaders have been men of that type. They may have blundered often, when their intentions were most commendable, but their service has been of inestimable value to the Church. Luther made some very serious mistakes. At times he was most intolerant, and by contrast with his fellow laborer, Erasmus, he was lacking in much of self-control, and calm dispassionate judgment. But God used Luther to give us the Reformation. The Searcher of hearts saw beneath the surface, and by His overruling power made use of the gold and silver, and in due time the dross was burned away.

How often the Church has been saved from stagnation by the restless, impulsive spirit of the Peters within its walls. The tendency to settle down in some rut and forget the great mission entrusted to us is an ever present danger; and well may we thank God for the ardent Peters whose spirit will not be quiet, but who are forever calling for action, and insisting upon our being up and doing. When this temperament has been trained under the loving care of Jesus, let us as a Church prize it as one of our greatest assets. Let us remember that often where we see only impulsiveness, Jesus sees a rock, a petros.

Peter was a man capable of a strong ardent love. Beneath the rough exterior there was an affection that was deep and true. We get some little glimpse of his attachment to Jesus in some of the incidents recorded. Notable among these are his feelings of bitter remorse when after denying his Master he looks up to meet those questioning eyes of Jesus, and "went out and wept bitterly." Again, when the thrice repeated question recalls his shameful denial, his heart was grieved, ah, pained to its very depths, that Jesus should

ask again and again, "Lowest thou Me more than these?" It was the love of a strong loyal heart that answered back, Lord, how can you doubt it? "Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee." In this again Peter is the representative of many precious souls, who have their "pulses of nobleness and their ashes of shame" -- one day doing the laudable, beautiful thing, and the next, falling into some old weakness that humiliates them to the dust. Let such take courage. The Lord's choice of Peter, and His successful molding of his character into a thing of grace and strength, promises the same results to others.

James the Son of Zebedee

Next in order we have James, and we are given a clue to his character by the name Jesus gave to him, and his brother John --"Boanerges, son of thunder." We are not surprised therefore to find him also full of burning enthusiasm. With his brother he gladly left his business to follow Jesus, and it would be safe to say that he left it with a whole-hearted enthusiasm, and took up his new experiences with an unmixed devotion. His burning zeal led him to urge the calling down of fire on the unsociable Samaritans, and in later years he became a hated man among the Jews, doubtless due to his intense zeal for Christ. Jesus takes hold of this fire and moulds James into the character He desired. No matter how twisted the metal may be, if heated in the fire, it can easily be shaped into a thing of usefulness. and beauty, and so it was with James. Had he held back, and only half-heartedly obeyed the Master's invitation, "Follow Me," he never would have become the character we find him. So much depends on our response to the power of Jesus, as to whether our deformities will ever be straightened out.

In the Epistle of James we find a very significant reference to Elijah, who we remember was a fiery enthusiast of former days. James had much of the Elijah character, and his Epistle betrays an ardent admiration for Elijah. James was a son of thunder like Elijah, and he was also a man of prayer as was the Prophet. These elements Jesus very successfully blended as He found them in the character of this Apostle, and thus He makes him a representative also of many of His people who have responded to His power. James could easily have become a fanatic, or a cynic, or even a Pharisee by reason of his enthusiasm, but Jesus prevented his degeneration toward any of these.

James learned under the example and the influence of Jesus, that when the truth is wedded to enthusiasm, it saves from intolerance, for the truth begets charity. He learned also that when humility tempers our enthusiasm, it saves from pride, for only the meek and lowly truly represent the truth. Again, he learned that the greatest, surest safeguard against disillusionment is provided for by linking prayer with enthusiasm. And thus we have come to know James as a pillar in the Church, ardent and zealous, but neither fanatical, cynical, nor pharisaically disposed. Taken up in the crude as were the others, but responding to the influence of Jesus, he becomes the personification of the stability of character that results from assimilation of the wisdom that God imparts liberally to all who ask for it.

John, the Apostle of Love

John occupies a unique position among the Twelve, all of whom were loved by Jesus. John alone is spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." These things, however, give us some little idea of John's character. He too had an

individuality all his own, and consequently his contact with Jesus would affect him materially different than the same contact would affect others. The Church has chosen to designate him, "the Apostle of love," but John prefers to be thought of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," doubtless for the very purpose of having us see more clearly how that love affected him, what it made out of the crude metal that the Master found on the shore of the lake some years before.

Tradition pictures John with features quite effeminate, and with golden hair flowing down over his shoulders, doubtless because it was thought these things would harmonize with the deep, devotional love exhibited by John. But we seriously question these traditional photographs of this son of thunder. Fishermen did not usually appear in such guise, their life was a hazardous one, where brawn and muscle and rigor were needed. Moreover the Gospels show us that John could be decidedly intolerant also, and with his brother would gladly destroy the Samaritans. He possessed a decidedly ambitious spirit that would push aside the claims of others for a place on the right hand or the left. He evidently was not born nor found by Jesus a saint, but he was made one by his contact with Him.

John stands primarily as a representative of a contemplative portion of God's people, and his Gospel reveals how his contemplation of Jesus affected him. "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14.) Even a superficial survey of John's writings will show that his mind was always turning to the excellencies of character and conduct exhibited in Jesus, and this it was that made him the Apostle of love, and "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

John was drawn to the great principles of regeneration and sonship. The other Gospel writers give the outward acts of Jesus, John gives us their inward and eternal meaning. Among his discoveries that we might note are these: "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." "He that loveth not, knoweth not God." "Every one that loveth, knoweth God." "We love God because He first loved us." "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." "He that hath the Son hath life." And many similar passages we find in his writings.

John therefore represents a very important and saving element in the Church. His deep spiritual insight into the real, vital facts of discipleship has been found in sufficient numbers of God's people to offset the over emphasizing of the externals. His piety and unusual devotion to the person of Jesus has found expression in other lives, where the one special desire has been to make the living spirit of Jesus the magnetic power of association and service. One could not dogmatize here, but proportionally it would seem that the Church has never had any larger percentage of Johns than did the original Twelve. They are therefore, of great value to us today. Let us fully appreciate them.

John likewise encourages us to hope for a complete victory over our weaknesses. At first he is selfishly ambitious for first place in the Kingdom; ready also to bring speedy disaster upon opponents, but Jesus completely transforms him. Love destroyed his spirit of revenge, and we may read his writings through and never find his name mentioned. He never refers to incidents where "Peter, James, and John" stand out in special prominence. He never once betrays the old ambition for highest place, but becomes the personification of the love and self-abnegation he witnessed in Jesus. By His success with John, the Lord teaches us how we may also become disciples whom Jesus loves.

Matthew the Publican

We may read the other narratives through but we never meet the expression "Peter and James and John the fishermen" or a similar statement regarding the others, and it is therefore worthy of note that Matthew in his own record gives us the phrase, "Matthew the publican." This represents a noble character on the part of this disciple. Evidently he wanted to have it known what contact with Jesus had done for him. His conversion was a tribute to the sympathy and love of Jesus, for the degradation of his office as a publican put him in the company of social outcasts. Even Jesus Himself classified the office as deplorably degraded in His oft-repeated expression, "publicans and harlots." We are perfectly safe in assuming that the thing that attracted Matthew to Jesus was His great sympathetic ministry. To him Jesus was different from the haughty Pharisee, and the average Jew. The alacrity with which he left all to follow Jesus suggests that he was waiting for sympathy, and for some expression of confidence in his real character. Doubtless at heart he was a much better man than his occupation would suggest, and his soul was not at rest. He had grown rich at his profession, but he was ready to abandon all to follow One who had, not where to lay His head. His forsaking all meant more than it did to some of the others. When disappointment came, the others could say, "I go a fishing," but Matthew's position was gone completely. He could not return.

No one saw the worth of Matthew except Jesus, but he occupies a place of special importance among the Apostles. His Gospel is the most complete record of our Lord's ministry, the most detailed, and one of the strongest and most authentic witnesses we have of Jesus' life and ministry. He gives us the Sermon on the Mount with greater fullness, and it is through him we have the record of the Great Invitation : "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew becomes also a representative character to us. He very well represents a class of whom the Lord has special need. The circumstances surrounding his own calling and the great sympathy manifested by Jesus in lifting him out of that degradation and unrest, changed and fixed his life. One of the most notable incidents recorded of Matthew is the account of the great feast he made subsequent to his conversion. The guests invited to this feast reveal Matthew's spirit. He invited a great company of publicans and others, **and Jesus also.** (Luke 5:29.) How he yearned to bring these together! Surely his heart burned with a desire to bring others, as needy as he himself had been, into contact with "the sympathizing Jesus." What hopes must have struggled in his heart as he watched to see the fruitage of his missionary zeal. And be it noted, Matthew was not disappointed in Jesus. Jesus did not refuse to mingle with these needy ones. He would lose caste by so doing in the eyes of others, but He came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matthew illustrates the alert missionary spirit. That Great Invitation had been music to his own soul, for he had come to Jesus as he was, "weary and worn and sad," and had found in Him a resting place that had truly made him glad.

Thus Matthew extended the influence and ministry of Jesus. He brought the starved and afflicted to Jesus, and he brought Jesus to them. What have we done to extend the ministry of this same Jesus? Have we been particularly solicitous for the needs of the sad and discouraged, and have we been zealous in our efforts to extend the ministry of the great Physician to them? Well might we pray the Lord of the harvest to send us more a of such characters, more who have heard and been touched by His gracious words -- 'Come unto

Me." "We are grateful for every word which Matthew wrote, and could not spare one of the least, but if by some dreadful calamity the rest had been lost, and there remained only this tender appeal and gracious invitation, we should yet be forever grateful that, in the mercy of God, Levi, the publican, was called to be an associate and apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ." Like, the others he is an example of what the influence of Jesus will accomplish in a grateful soul wholly given up to His love.

Andrew, Simon Peter's Brother

What a significance there is in this statement. We would never have supposed that so close a kinship could exist between Peter and Andrew. Peter was full of confidence; Andrew was slow and practical one impulsive, the other cautious, one a born leader, the other never capable. of rising higher than a follower. This disciple represents the practical mind. He may never soar, and he may never achieve any brilliant successes, but he will nevertheless serve a very needed purpose in the service of, the Church. His practical mind is revealed on two occasions. When Jesus questioned His disciples about supplies to feed the multitude, Andrew was the only one with any suggestion to offer: "There is a lad here with five loaves and two small fishes." And Jesus accepted his suggestion. Again when Philip had met the Greeks who were inquiring for Jesus, evidently he did not know what to do, so conferred with Andrew, and straightway the inquirers were brought to Jesus. He was also a humble man. In point of time he was called first, but in after days, when Peter, James, and John who had become disciples later on, were preferred before him, he makes no complaint. He is willing to be known only as "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother."

But Jesus made no mistake in calling Andrew, for He has great need of practical men. Such constitute a ballast greatly needed in all stages of the Church.

Nathanael, an Israelite Indeed

Little is recorded of Nathanael, whose name in full appears to have been Nathanael Bartholomew, but that little is full of information. Jesus, who could read the heart, introduces us to a rare character -- "an Israelite indeed." He was an honest seeker, but skeptical. He was the only one who hesitated when called -- "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" -- but he was thoroughly honest and deeply in earnest. Doubtless he was found many times under the fig tree seeking guidance, but full of a hindering prejudice that obscured his vision. He stands to represent the hesitant mind, earnestly praying for light on the problems of life, but afraid to launch out in a practical attempt to determine the mind of the Lord. "We may even make the fig tree a place of hiding from the Christ we seek, who calls us to seek Him elsewhere." But such earnest characters are also needed. Despite his peculiar characteristics he is, in the eyes of Jesus, a character that will be as preserving salt in any company of His people. The honesty, piety, integrity, cautiousness, and prayerful spirit of such, will exercise an influence powerfully effective in checking rash and hasty conclusions, and oftentimes by simple questions direct the mind to sober considerations. Such characters are not self-opinionated, nor fixed, but always willing to "come and see," to give an attentive ear to good advice.

Thomas, the Doubter

Comment upon Thomas is usually confined to his doubtful attitude regarding the resurrection of Jesus, but other incidents show us that he possessed some excellent qualities of character worthy of imitation. For example, when Jesus' words respecting the death of Lazarus seemed suggestive of some impending crisis, Thomas gathered that the worst was about to happen to Jesus, therefore he said, "Let us go that we may die with Him." His was not "an evil heart of unbelief;" but a love that was constant and true.

On another occasion when Jesus had spoken to them of His going away, it was Thomas who entreatingly pleaded, "Lord; we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Surely he meant, Lord, we would go also if we could only know the way. It was love groping unaided by faith, trying to penetrate the gloom that he felt settling down upon his vision: Again; when the crash had come, and Jesus had actually died and left them, it staggered his faith severely. Then, like many whom he represents, he apparently went off to brood alone over his grief. He was not present when Jesus appeared shortly after His resurrection to a number of the disciples. Their testimony did not convince him, and nothing would but the nail and spear wounds in the hands and side of the One he had given up as lost.

Thus we find his counterpart among the brethren today. They are prone to cultivate the habit of brooding alone over the disappointments of life, nursing their grievances within their own souls, and full of doubt respecting the sincerity of others: Any who have read John Bunyan's "Grace Abounding" will have a vivid picture of the Thomas spirit. The gloomy side of things has a peculiar influence on the minds of such, and a constant conflict between hope and fear fills their lives. But in order that such struggling souls might be encouraged, Jesus numbers Thomas the doubter among His special disciples.

And we are glad Thomas insisted on seeing the wound prints. These are the very evidences we too want to see, and it is on the basis of those same marks that we too cry, "My Lord and my God." The very things that Thomas had rebelled against three days before, and that had brought him his deepest depression, now became the tangible, permanent foundations for an abiding faith. In much of this, Thomas is to us also a character from whom we may learn valuable lessons.

Philip

"He findeth Philip." Of Philip' only; are these words used. He saw the others -- Peter, and John at their work, Nathanael under the fig tree, Andrew following Him, but He "findeth" Philip. The Gospels do not tell us much about him, but evidently he was a devout man before Jesus found him. More than likely he was of a deep, inquiring mind before his call, for this quality of mind manifests itself subsequently in his earnest, request: "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." He therefore represents a class who are definitely drawn to Jesus, but who seem unable to fully enter into the spiritual life He opens up. We hear them repeatedly confessing inability to "follow" the spiritual trend of things. There is always a vagueness about, some things to them. Much that others seem to enjoy, lies just beyond their range of vision, and therefore their cry; "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us," notwithstanding the fact that in their own beloved Master the Father has been fully revealed. Some there are who are able to penetrate deeply into the invisible things, and to hold rich fellowship with the Unseen in their meditative hours, but the vast majority of Christians do not thus visualize and concentrate on such things, and are made to feel that they are guilty of a

grave neglect. But Philip is a kindred spirit to such, deeply desiring to enjoy the full revelation of the Father, and in a hunger of soul that will surely be filled eventually, they long to know even as they themselves are known. His prayer is the very prayer that brought Jesus to earth, and must be the prayer of every heart until faith is lost in sight.

As we have seen previously, Philip was not at all gifted with initiative. He had no suggestion to offer as to how the multitude should be fed. He did not know what to do with the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus. Yet he also was specially chosen as one of the Twelve. Surely then his usefulness must be found in some other qualities he possessed. Philip was in some measure like Andrew. He was a man who wanted the facts. Theories were of very little practical use to them. He wanted to see through the thing and then he would be satisfied. Give him the definite evidence, and then he could step out with assurance. Jesus has always taken care to have enough Philips among His people to stabilize and safeguard His Church from unbalanced, hasty undertakings. We owe much to the honest questioning minds that sometimes halt our over-impulsive zeal by soberly asking its about the facts and wherefore. More than once the slow plodding mind of some Philip has been as valuable to the Church as the ready-for-action spirit of some "son of thunder."

Not Ponderous Machinery He Wants

Such was the cabinet Jesus selected as His special ministers, on whom He placed such great responsibilities. True He later added Paul to their number, and though perhaps their superior in many ways, yet he too was a man of like passion, and needed the molding influence of Jesus. From every human angle they constituted a very weak, inefficient ministry surely. But what a mark those twelve men have left in the world! What unquestionable success has attended their ministry, and how fully God's purposes have been carried forward through them. Truly, we learn that God's ways are not as our ways, that He does choose the simple to bring to naught the counsels of the worldly wise. The great lesson we are to learn is that by the very mixture of characters God chooses, He thereby stabilizes and safeguards all. May we learn to utilize all these temperaments, and enlist all in the service of the Master. It is not ponderous machinery He wants, but hearts of love and devotion. It is not a new social order He seeks today, but a Church untrammelled by human appendages, and wholly subject to the evangelism and spiritual power that flows from Christ alone.

Surely then, finding these men so much like Ourselves, and observing the influence of Jesus upon their lives, and the effectiveness of His ministry through them, we should realize renewed confidence and courage. We can avoid disaster, reinforce our position, and go forward with the assurance that our beloved Head is wholly capable of finishing His work in us and by us, if we leave ourselves in the place where He can mould us according to His will.

MANLY MEN

"Let my early dreams come true
With the good I fain would do;

Clothe with life my weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant."

CHRISTIAN LIFE is more than a tender sentiment. Christian character is more than gentleness, patience, meekness, humility, kindness. There are some men who have these qualities who lack the more a robust characteristics of manhood. They are weak, nerveless, spiritless. They are wanting in courage, force, energy and that indefinable quality called grit. Their gentleness is the gentleness of weakness. They are not manly men. Their virtues are of the passive kind, and they lack those active, positive traits that give men power and make them strong to stand and resistless when they move. Such persons have no strength of conviction. Holding their opinions lightly, their grasp of them is easily relaxed. They are remarkable for their forbearance and meekness, thus illustrating one phase of true Christly character, but they serve only as moral buffers in society to deaden the force of the concussion produced by other men's passions. They generate no motion, they kindle no enthusiasm, they inspire no courage, they make no aggression against the world's hosts of evil. They are good men. They have the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the amiability of John, but they want the boldness of Peter, the enthusiasm of Paul, and the moral heroism of Luther superadded to their passive virtues to make them truly my strong men.

There is another class of defects sometimes found in men of very gentle spirit. They possess many of those qualities of disposition that are most highly commended in the Scriptures. They are not easily provoked. They speak the soft answer that turneth away wrath. They endure well the rough experiences of life. They are gentle to all men and full of kindness, and yet they are wanting in the quality of perfect truthfulness. They are neither false nor dishonest in great matters, but in countless minor matters they are characterized by a disregard of that exact **truthfulness** which the religion of Christ requires . . . They are ready to promise any favor asked of them -- they have not the courage to say "No!" to a request -- but they frequently fail to fulfill what they so readily promise.

It is worth our while to study closely the character of true manliness as we have its type and pattern in the life of our Lord. We soon learn that while in Him love blossomed out in all that is rich and beautiful in human tenderness and gentleness, it did not leave Him weak and strengthless. Never was any other man so full of compassion, so pitiful toward those who had wandered, so patient in bearing wrong, or so forgiving toward his enemies. But you seek in vain in all His life for the faintest trace of moral feebleness. To Him sin in any form was unutterably abhorrent. Truth shone in every lineament of His soul. He was the embodiment of courage. All the active virtues, as well as the passive, were exhibited in Him. He was not merely a patient sufferer; He set a-going in the world the mightiest forces of divinity -- forces whose resistless momentum has penetrated all the world's life, and which even at the distance of nineteen centuries have lost none of their energy or vitality. He was not a weak man swept along by the strong currents of the world's passions to an unavoidable destiny. So He sometimes appears to superficial observation, but so He was not. Every step was voluntary. His was the sublime march of a king. He had . . . power and was always active, never passive even in what seem the most helpless hours of His life. He laid down His life; He had power to lay it down. Even in dying He was active, voluntarily giving up His life.

We cannot study enough this sometimes neglected phase of Christ's life—the force and positiveness of His character. Patient to endure, there was yet power enough in His gentlest word to make it a living influence for uncounted centuries. His most passive moments were marked by exhibitions of . . . [power]. Submitting to the arresting band, He yet put forth His hand to work a miracle of healing.

Then He was in every way the manliest of men -- large-hearted, noble-spirited, generous to the very uttermost of self-sacrifice. No microscopic eye can find in all His life a trace of selfishness or one token of meanness.

Such is the Pattern, and a Christian man must be strong as well as tender. The active virtues must be cultivated as well as the passive. Meekness must not be weakness. The soft speech must not be the timid utterance of moral feebleness. Like the mighty engine which can polish a needle or cut a bar of iron, a Christian man must have a touch as gentle as an infant's and yet possess the courage of a hero to smite evil and to do the Lord's work. With charity that beareth all things and endureth all things he must have the force of character which will make his influence a mighty positive power for good. Truth must be wrought into the very grain and fiber of his manhood. His word must be pure as gold. His lightest promises must be as sacredly kept as his most solemn engagements In a word, he must combine unflinching integrity, unvarying promptness and punctuality and conscientious truthfulness with generosity and liberality.

Such a man will grow into a marvelous power in the community in which he lives. People will believe in his religion because he lives it. No one will sneer when he exhorts others to be honest, upright and true, prompt and punctual, and faithful to utmost scrupulousness to their engagements. His life is one unflawed crystal. He is a manly man. Even the enemies of religion respect him. His simple words are weighty. His whole influence is for truth and nobleness. His daily life is a sermon. God is honored and the world is blessed by his living. -- *Selected from the writings of J. R. Miller.*

"CLEAR THE WAY"

"Men of thought! be up and stirring
Night and day;
Sow the seed; withdraw the curtain,
Clear the way!
Men of action, aid and cheer them
As you may!
There's a fount about to stream,
There's a light about to beam,
There's a warmth about to glow,
There's a flower about to blow,
There's a midnight blackness changing
Into gray.
Men of thought, and men of action,
Clear the way!

"Once the welcome light has broken,
Who shall say
What shall be the unimagined glories
Of the day?
What the evil that shall perish
In its ray?
Aid the dawning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of honest men;
Aid it, paper; aid it, type;
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play.
Men of thought, and men of action,
Clear the way!

"Lo! a cloud's about to vanish
From the day;
Lo! the Right's about to conquer,
Clear the way!
Many a brazen wrong to crumble
Into clay
With the Right shall many more
Enter smiling at the door;
With the giant Wrong shall fall
Many others, great and small,
That for ages long have held us
For their prey.
Men of thought, and men of action,
Clear the way!"

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH GOD

"Oh Father Thou hast given Thy Son power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." -- John 11:2, 3.

THIS PRAYER of our Lord on the last night of His earthly sojourn set forth the object and purpose of His mission amongst men, that it was to give eternal life to all those whom the Father had given Him, or would give Him in the future. Eternal life would be given them only as they would come to know God. The Savior would make them acquainted with the Father. At that time, the world knew not God, neither Him whom God sent into the world (John 8:55; 1:10); and even God's people, Israel, who professed to be His chosen ones, had only a faint conception of Him-so meager a conception that their knowledge of God could not gain for them eternal life. Ever since the entrance of sin in Eden, the course of man had been downward and away from God. Every step downward only carried the world further from God, until, as Paul says, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." (Rom. 1:28.) The race of men, "knowing the judgment of God" (Rom. 1:32) blamed Him for all their trouble, and looking upon Him as their enemy, they became "haters of God." -- Rom. 1:30.

God's Majesty and Power Revealed

While to God's people, Israel, there was given some knowledge of His character, it did not bring them eternal life. In the shaking and thundering at Sinai's mountain at the giving of the Law, they could see something of God's majesty and power. In the Law which said, Thou shalt and thou shalt not, with a penalty for the least fracture thereof, they saw something of the sternness and severity of God's justice. They saw something of God's glory and wisdom in the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and His handiwork in the marvels of creation; but they could not see the other side of His character. They could not understand or comprehend, God's kindness, His love for His creatures, because it was not yet revealed. Thus in their ignorance humanity was without God and without hope in the world. The object of Christ's mission to the world was to effect reconciliation and to make mankind acquainted with God. Such acquaintance was to mean that they should know something about God, something about His character, His plans and purposes. Christ's sacrificial experience from Jordan to Calvary was not only a proof of His love for those for whom He died, but it was also an outstanding demonstration of the love of God who gave His Son, as we read, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John 4:9.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." -- 1 John 3:16.

True Knowledge Makes Free

To know God in the sense that gains eternal life, involves more than that of a mere superficial knowledge about God, such as that He exists. It implies rather to understand Him, to have a deep heart appreciation of His loving kindness in what He did for us, such as would influence the course of our lives from earthly and sensual things to heavenly and spiritual things. The matter of knowing God merely with the intellect and that of knowing Him by a heart appreciation is well illustrated by our Lord's words to the Jews. (John 8:32, 42.) When, the Jews began to believe on Him, the Lord told them that if they would continue believing they would be His disciples, that then they would "know the truth, and the truth would make them free." But in reply they boasted that they had Abraham to their father and were not in bondage to any man. Again our Lord replied by saying, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," and again they repeated, "Abraham is our father." They reasoned that because they were lineal descendants of that great and good man Abraham, who believed God, and who was counted as righteous, therefore they were without sin, and right in line for all the promises that God made to faithful Abraham; but our Lord gave them to understand that their reasoning was wrong, and that if they were the children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham, they would have the faith of Abraham, and the obedience of Abraham, and would love Him, because He came from God, and God sent Him. "Ye seek to kill Me." This Abraham did not do. Therefore ye are not the children of Abraham, but the deeds which you do give evidence of who is your father.

The Jews who were addressed by our Lord saw the force of His argument, and retorted, We be not born of fornication; for we Jews have one Father, even God. But our Lord said, Ye are of your father the Devil, and you do the works of your father.

Many of the Lord's professing people all along through the Age, even some in our day, believe themselves in good standing with the Lord, and that they are right in line to receive the blessings of the Father which He has prepared for all the faithful, just because they are the converts of a great reformer, or because they have come into present Truth through a channel which they assume the Lord is using, or an organization that is doing a great work in the world, and because they; are still loyal to that agency. But not so. If our Lord were here He would tell such the same that He told the Jews in His day, that all their loyalty to human leaders, or channels, or organizations, did not amount to anything; even if such reformers were men of God, and if such organizations were composed of true Christians, they still could not obtain entrance into the Kingdom by such a course; for it is not a matter of loyalty to any human leader or Church organization, or channel, but loyalty to the Lord and the Truth proclaimed by Him and His chosen Apostles, and an individual character developed because of such loyalty -- a personal relationship to the Father and His Son by an acquaintance with them, and an individual faith, an individual love, and an individual obedience, as a result of such individual relationship.

Some of the Lord's people who have been ensnared into a bondage to human leadership or channel or Church organization controlled by human leaders, having come to see that their individual relationship to the Lord as the Head of the true Church is the proper one, and having come out of bondage into the liberty of Christ, are inclined to go to the other extreme. Fearing lest they again be brought into bondage, they stand alone, and refuse to meet with other Christians. Such do not rightly distinguish between being joined to a human head or organization and that of co-operating and fellowshiping for mutual helpfulness, and for the purpose of forwarding the interests of the Kingdom. Such appear to be ignoring the Apostle's injunction to "Neglect not the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," and to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," co-operation and fellowship, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" -- forbearing one another in love. (Eph. 4:2, 3.) Our Lord and the Apostles always encouraged such a union and never condemned it.

Vision of God Obscures all other Objects

And now what is meant by knowing God? To really know God implies both an intellectual and a heart appreciation of Him; a knowledge of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and of the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, "what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"; and to "be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth [all human] knowledge"; to know "what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" -- a knowledge of these things means a knowledge of God. -- Phil. 3:14; Col. 1:26, 27; Eph. 3:18, 19; 1:18.

A revelation of the Plan of God and of the inheritance prepared by Him for His faithful Bride gives us a vision of God and His Son. Such a vision means the obscuring of every other object and every earthly ambition. The Apostle Paul who had caught such a vision of Christ and the glorious inheritance, of the saints, became so lost to all earthly things that he exclaimed, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: on whose account I have suffered the loss of all things, and consider them to

be vile refuse, so that I may gain Christ. That I may know Hire and the power of His resurrection." -- Phil. 3:8, 10.

"Since My Eyes Were Fixed on Jesus"

To have such a vision means to be introduced to the Divine family, and to have an acquaintance with -them. "We love God because He first loved us," and hath done so much for us; and so the love of God and of Christ constraineth us, and is the secret of our service for the Master. It was love for the Master that caused Peter to leave all his earthly treasures to do service for Him. It was Paul's love, for His Lord that enabled him to esteem the knowledge of Christ greater riches than life itself. For he said, "I die daily, for my rejoicing, I have in Christ." (1 Cor. 15:3.) And all down through the Age there were the Lord's saintly ones, many of whom proved that their love for their Lord was greater than any earthly thing, even life itself, which was sacrificed at the hands of cruel persecutors and esteemed but a trivial thing in comparison to the love of God, which took possession of their hearts and controlled every action of their lives.

"This is life eternal" -- that we might know God. Our worthiness for eternal life does not depend alone on our being without sin; for John, beholding one like unto the Son of Man walking in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, addressing the Church at Ephesus, finds no occasion of fault with their works, no fault with their labors, no fault with their patient service and their hatred of imposters and of those whose deeds are sinful. They had fallen from grace, and the one thing against them was that they had left their first love. Their hope of again enjoying the favor of their Lord was contingent upon their return to their first love. (Rev. 2:2, 6.) The Apostle Paul, gave his testimony to this by saying that though he had the eloquence of angels and proclaimed the prophetic mysteries of God from a knowledge of them, though he had all faith in their full accomplishment in due time, yet if he lacked one thing, "love," his labors would be all in vain-as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and that though he sacrificed all his goods or even his own body in a good cause, it was of no avail, it could not bring him the favor of God, could not reward with eternal life, unless it was prompted by a love born from a knowledge of God and His blessed Son. -- 1 Cor. 13.:1-4.

It was love for the Master that was the secret of service in the early Church, and it was love for Him that drew them to Him and to one another, and they needed no commands 'or threats that unless they were loyal to certain things or opinions of their brethren they would lose their standing and fellowship with them. Just so now, the true Church The fiery trials will also surely test our "first love," is still drawn to her Lord and Master and to faithful obedience to Him by he love for Him and not by commands to service or desires to accomplish certain ends.

Love and Faith to be Tested

While it is not so difficult to see that all the systems of earth are to be judged and removed preparatory to the establishment of God's Kingdom, it is more difficult to see that those who are now being selected to reign in that Kingdom, are to be tested and tried as to their faith and loyalty to Him who has invited them to share the honors of the Kingdom with Ham. And because of the high position to be conferred on these, "judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Pet. 4:17.) Therefore, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing

happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) The fiery trials, the testings and the siftings, are just as important, just as necessary to fit and prepare those called to the Kingdom, as a knowledge of God and of His Son and what they have done for us. So important in God's sight are these trials that Peter says, "The trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, [in order that it] might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:7.) While the Lord's people were tested all down through the Age, as to whether their professions, their sacrifices, their conduct, was prompted by an overflowing love for God from the heart, or as to whether it is any earthly consideration that influences them, it is especially true now in the harvest period, the close of the Age. More light is shining now than ever before, and just so also more and more severe tests are now permitted to try the Lord's people in order to prove their worthiness of the light now shining. There are trials of our loyalty to the Truth or loyalty to the opinions of men, loyalty to the Lord or loyalty to an organization, loyalty to the Bible or loyalty to the writings of men.

Attractions that Dampen Our Love

Then there are other tests, which will make manifest our hearts, and prove our worthiness or unworthiness of the blessing of the Lord. Are we in possession of the Truth and also the spirit of the Truth? For it is one thing to have a knowledge of the Truth; and it is another thing to have the spirit of the Truth. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." -- Rom. 8:9.

Our consecration -- is it complete, entire, or only half-hearted. It will be made manifest by the many influences operating to halt us in carrying out a life of full devotion to the end of the race. Our love for God and all the various features of His great Plan of redemption is to be tested by the many things of earth which have their attractions that dampen our love for God and heavenly things-, and thereby cause us to lose the reward of eternal life. The fiery trials will also surely test our "first love," and manifest whether we are faithfully continuing in well doing or are becoming weary and sitting down in idleness, and thereby unfitting us for the promised reward.

The World Knoweth not God

At our Lord's First Advent He stated that the world knew not God (John 17:25), and that His mission in the world was to declare Him, or to make Him known to men, in order that they should not always perish, but that they might know God and by such knowledge be rescued from their perishing condition to life eternal. Now while Christ came to earth nearly two thousand years ago to make known the Father, the world still knoweth Him not. They have not yet become acquainted with God, because they have not yet had an introduction to "the only true God."

During this Gospel Age introduction to God has been limited to a special class for a special purpose -- to those only who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and who have ears to hear. These are invited to become a part of the Divine family, sons of God, on the heavenly plane, prospective judges for the world's great Judgment Day, when all mankind will be made acquainted with God, by an introduction to Him by the world's great Mediator, the Christ, Head and Body. Because of the high position to which these are now invited, they are required to pass through special trials and

tests, such as the world will not be required to pass through during the time when they will be made acquainted with God.

When this Gospel Age and the work of this Gospel Age shall have come to a close, which we have reason to believe will be soon, and when the great time of trouble shall have humbled the pride of man into the dust, and when men shall begin to see that the hand of God is in all this destruction of the systems of earth, "Many people shall say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths." -- Isa. 2 :3.

"I Will Sanctify My Great Name"

When the world begin to seek the Lord, they will be glad to have His acquaintance, and they will have an introduction to God at the hands of the world's great Mediator, the Christ, Head and Body. The Scriptures indicate that God's covenanted people, Israel, will be among the first to get acquainted with God. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother; saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." (Jer. 31:31-34.) As the Kingdom work makes progress, right doing will be rewarded and evil doing punished, and God's true character will become more and more manifest by His acts of love and mercy for His creatures. His name that has been blasphemed by so many misrepresentations of His character, will become sanctified. Then the whole world will soon learn to know more of the true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Thus saith the Prophet, "I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye [the professed people of God] have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen [the non-professing people of God] shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." -- Ezek. 36:23.

"All Shall be Taught of God"

Not only those who are living at this time shall come to know God and Jesus Christ, but also all those who have gone into the tomb shall become acquainted with them; for "all in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth" either to a resurrection to life or a resurrection by judgment. The very fact of an awakening from the tomb will be a powerful factor in creating a desire to know and become acquainted with the agencies who have wrought so great a miracle. Our Lord Himself said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." -- John 12:32.

While all will be drawn, and all will become acquainted with God and His Son Jesus Christ, for "all shall be taught of God," the Scriptures plainly teach that their wills will not be coerced; eternal life the gift of God will not be forced upon any, but is to be given to those only who develop that heart appreciation from a knowledge of the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ,

expressed by the Law which said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength and thy neighbor as thyself.

MAY WE TRUST THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE?"

CONSIDERING the general disposition of our time to reject the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is truly encouraging to read so clear and forceful a statement of the Truth as is represented in a reply to a question recently published in "The Moody Bible Institute Magazine," which we submit below:

Springdale, Conn.

Editors, Moody Monthly:

In a recent issue I read with interest and pleasure the doctrinal statement of the Moody Bible Institute. But I would like to call attention to Article II, which reads: "The Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments, is a Divine revelation, the original autographs of which were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit."

All this I firmly believe, but it seems to me it does not meet a need which confronts us today. Many will reply that it may be true, but as we do not have access to the "original autographs" how are we to know what error may have found its way into our present Bible?

Can you not give us something on this point which will be reassuring to people who have had their faith shaken by assertions that our Bible contains much that is not authentic? I would like to read something with regard to the Holy Spirit's guidance through the many copying and translations, insuring to us a safe revelation through the pages of our present day Bible.

Very sincerely,

(Signed) S. P. F.

In reply to the foregoing we will use as an illustration: the Declaration of Independence.

How many American citizens know whether the original of that document is still in existence? And if assured that it is, how many know just where it is located? And if they know where it is located, how many have ever seen, much less compared, that original with the particular copy which they possess?

There are few, if any, who have done this, and yet there is not one who doubts that his particular copy is a correct transcript of the original.

And why have we no doubt about this? Because in all the years the government has been vitally interested in the preservation and transmission of a correct text, so that it would have been altogether impossible for any corruption to have crept into it.

Indeed, we may go further. Suppose the original text were decayed or destroyed? Could we not demonstrate the accuracy of any given copy in an entirely satisfactory way? Would not an examination of all the extant copies in different editions in successive decades, to say nothing of copies in other

languages .and in other countries, would not such an examination leave us without doubt the-t all the copies pointed to one original? And would we not be quite sure as to the content of that original?

It is an argument quite as simple and convincing as this by which our fears may be quieted and our faith confirmed concerning the translations of our Bible today. If for the moment we may leave God Himself out of the equation, how much greater has been the interest of the Jewish nation in the first instance and the Christian Church in the second, in the preservation of the text of the Bible, than that of the United States government in the preservation of the text of the Declaration of Independence? How much more has depended upon it! And as a matter of fact, when we come to a comparison of the various copies of the Old and New Testaments extant, the manuscripts and versions extending back to the time of Christ and beyond, what a demonstration we possess that there was one original and what the text of that original was!

II.

It is impossible in so brief a space, to present the evidence for this, but the history of the evidence may be sketched thus:

1. We have our earliest printed Bible say, in the fifteenth century, and as the text of a book cannot be changed after it is typed, it is a simple matter to compare the printed Bible of the twentieth century with that of the fifteenth and determine whether they agree. Naturally, this has been done with perfectly satisfactory results.

2. Back of the printed Bible of the fifteenth century are the manuscripts, the written copies of the various books, thousands of which were scattered throughout the public and private libraries of Europe. These were not in every case copies of the whole Bible, but parts of the. Bible, which when brought together, however, give us the Bible as a whole.

3. In the case of the New Testament which we consider first, some of these manuscripts, three of them at least, are of a date as early as the fourth century of the Christian era, and a comparison of these with the New Testament we now have shows them to be the same.

4. Back of the manuscripts of the New Testament of the fourth century are the versions of the second century, the difference between a manuscript and a version being that while the former is always a copy of the Old or New Testament in the original language, Hebrew or Greek, the latter is a copy in some other language.

There were two versions existing in the second century, the Syriac, which was the Bible of the church in the east, and the Latin, the Bible of the church in the west. Neither of these versions contained all the books of the New Testament, but the two versions together contained them all except the Second Epistle of Peter.

It is pertinent to add also, that the Syriac version dated from about 150 A. D. Therefore, inasmuch as the books which formed its collection must have existed for some time previously in a separate form, its history practically brings us back to the close of the Apostolic Age and links up the New Testament of today with the period of Christ and His Apostles.

History of the Old Testament

5. The history of the Old Testament may be traced in the same way as the New, back to the time of Christ and His Apostles, and indeed for some three centuries earlier thereto. However, there is no question but that the Old Testament as we have it today, from Genesis to Malachi is the same as it was in their day. Destructive critics themselves will not deny this. Moreover, it is additionally interesting to know that the Old Testament most popular in the time of Christ and His Apostles was a translation from the Greek version known as the Septuagint. Christ authenticated that and we need nothing further surely.

6. Of course, a comparison of all these manuscripts and versions reveals a number of different readings, hundreds of thousands of them, in fact, for it could not be otherwise unless a perpetual miracle were wrought in the case of every scribe, editor and printer engaged in making a copy. But as a matter of fact, these "various readings" as they are known, need cause us no anxiety whatever.

So far as the New Testament is concerned, Westcott and Hort are good witnesses to the truth of this statement. Those English divines are considered by many scholars as the highest and latest authority on the Greek text. Also they belong to a school which has always made the most of any hostile argument which various readings were supposed to afford. Nevertheless, they assure us that the proportion of words in our present Greek text which are raised above doubt is about seven-eighths of the whole, and that the remaining one-eighth consists merely of changes in the order of words and other "trivialities" as they express it. To quote their exact language, "the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text." That is, as Dr. John Urquhart says, "the comparison of the manuscripts assures us that every 999 words are absolutely the words placed on record by the sacred penman, and that there is doubt only upon one word in every thousand."

In the case of the Old Testament, the situation is equally encouraging, or even more so. Variations in the Old Testament manuscripts are comparatively few, for the almost superstitious awe with which the Jews regarded the letter of Scripture, led to the most scrupulous care in the making of copies. No other books in the world have been guarded with such solicitude that they might be handed down exact in every jot and tittle.

III.

7. It will not be uninteresting, even if not very important, to go a little into detail here and exhibit the care by which copies of the Bible have been handed down to us.

To begin with the Old Testament. The Masorites were a company of Jewish scholars whose whole profession consisted in transcribing the Scriptures. In each of the books they counted the number of verses, words and letters. They could have told you that the letter "aleph," the first in the Hebrew alphabet, appears 42,377 times in the Old Testament and that the letter "beth," the second in the alphabet, occurs 38,218 times, and so on. They could have told you the middle letter of the Pentateuch and that which is in the middle of each of its particular books. They would never permit themselves to retouch their manuscripts. If a letter was found misplaced, they would not have changed it but have called the reader's attention to it in the margin. If any

mistake had escaped them they would have rejected the entire papyrus or parchment on which they had written and have begun anew. To that extent did they carry their veneration for the letter of the Word. The Masoretic text of the Old Testament which goes by their name, was completed about the ninth century of our era.

Modern Research

Gaussen, of Geneva, to whom we are indebted for some of these particulars, though they are found in other authorities, carries the story still further through the works of Gentile scholars of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: He names Houbigant, Michaelis, Kennicott and Rossi, representing respectively, France, Germany, England and Italy. The great researches of the first named were bound in four folios. The second gave thirty years labor to his investigations; the third, Kennicott, author of the great Critical Bible as it is known, consulted 581 Hebrew manuscripts and Professor Rossi no less than 680.

The same authority, Gaussen, speaking of the text of the New Testament, refers to the "gigantic investigations of Mill, Bengel, Wetstein and Griesbach." The last named consulted 335 manuscripts of the Gospels alone. The names of these scholars are fairly familiar to readers on the subject of the Greek text, even though they may not be students of the same. But Gaussen mentions another name not so familiar, Scholz, whom he does not further identify, who examined 674 manuscripts of the Gospels, 200 of the Acts, 256 of the Epistles of Paul, and 93 of the Apocalypse. All these clearly established the preservation of the text, so convincingly indeed that the hopes of the enemies of the faith were subverted. Michaelis refers to this. "At first," said he, "they (enemies of the faith) recommended these critical researches, expecting great discoveries from them to bolster up their unbelief, but those discoveries have not been made." The rationalist Eichhorn confessed that the different readings of the Hebrew manuscripts collected by Kennicott hardly offered sufficient interest to compensate for their cost!

Story of the Revised Version

8. It still remains to speak of the latest of these scholarly researches, and that on a large scale, namely, the Revised Version of the King James translation, "the greatest Biblican enterprise of modern times," as it has been well called. This was the first international and undenominational effort to prepare an English version of the Bible. It originated in the Church of England in 1870 when sixty-five scholars were selected for the work, forty-one of whom belonged to that Church, and twenty-four to other Christian bodies. In the following year an American committee, consisting of thirty-four men of different denominations, was formed to co-operate with the English. The labors of the joint committees covered several years, the New Testament company completing its work in 1880, and the Old Testament company in 1884.

Even an ordinary reader comparing these two versions, the King James and the Revised, can perceive that the changes though many, are comparatively unimportant. Sometimes an error in spelling has been corrected or a substitution has been made of one synonymous word for another, or a change of order in the wording of a phrase, but all this without any appreciable distinction of the sense. In other words, taking the changes altogether, they have not affected a single historical fact or essential doctrine of Christianity.

And yet these scholars are said to have had in their hands for examination and comparison no less than 2000 manuscripts of different books of the Old Testament and 3000 manuscripts of different books of the New.

IV.

9. This leads to a concluding paragraph or two on what may be called the critical value of the various readings. The Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., here quoted, was a professor in St. Andrew's University, Glasgow, and a member of the English New Testament committee. Speaking of the New Testament he says:

"The fact that we possess these various readings constitutes our best hope of being able to approach to certainty with respect to the original text. This may appear paradoxical, but it admits of easy demonstration.

"For example, take any ancient writing in the printed text of which there exist no various readings. Is that text therefore pure and trustworthy? Just the opposite. It is hopelessly corrupt. There are no varieties of reading because the work has come down to us in a single manuscript only, and there is no other authority to appeal to. Nothing could be more calamitous to an ancient author than such a circumstance. In the course of centuries his work has been often transcribed and, of necessity, disfigured with numerous errors. How are those errors to be discovered and corrected, when the work survives in only one manuscript? Where is there any possibility of comparison except by conjecture? And will not conjecture vary with different minds?

"How different the case in regard to the New Testament! No miracle has been wrought to preserve its text as it came from the pens of the inspired writers, which would have been something quite out of harmony with God's method of governing the world. The manuscripts have been left like others, to suffer from errors of pure mistake as well as errors of intention on the part of transcribers, it may be. But in the providence of God, it has been so ordered that vastly more copies of the sacred volume have come down to us in manuscript than of any other ancient writing whatsoever. Thus we have a wealth of material, an abundant means for ascertaining through careful examination and comparison, the true text of the original."

We now trust that we have satisfactorily answered the inquiry of our correspondent, and that he and our other readers may confidently believe that the sacred text in our hands in printed form is the eternal Word of God as He caused it to be written. -- MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE MONTHLY.

"THE WORD OF GOD"

"Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
True wisdom its pages unfold;
And though we may read them a thousand times o'er,
They never, no never, grow old!
Each line hath a pleasure, each promise a pearl,
That all if they will may secure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away,
God's Word shall forever endure.

"Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
The lamp that our Father above,

So kindly hath lighted to teach us the way
That leads to the arms of His love!
Its warnings, its counsels, are faithful and just;
Its judgments are perfect and pure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away,
God's Word shall forever endure."

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION AT PITTSBURGH

In harmony with the expressed wish of the brethren interested in arranging the program for the coming convention at Pittsburgh, October 31, November 1 and 2, we are again drawing the attention of the friends to that event. We are assured that special effort is being made to make this convention a memorable one in the lives of those who may be privileged to attend, and through them an influence for good to that wider circle of friends hindered by various circumstances from being personally present:

It is hoped of course that the very gratifying attendance of a year ago will be considerably increased on this occasion, for since that time others of the Lord's dear people have found deliverance from organizational bondage, and have recognized that the cause of their unsatisfactory spiritual experience in recent years has been the absence of liberty of conscience, and the substitution of works and futile declamations against the present evil world conditions, for the separated, sanctified holy walk and fellowship of the true 'saints of God. We are confident that all who can arrange to be present will receive a rich blessing at this convention.

It will be remembered that some time ago we published a resolution passed by the Pittsburgh brethren wherein they gave notice of their intention to hold these conventions annually for the few remaining years of the Church's pilgrimage, or as the Lord's providences should permit. This arrangement seems most appropriate, for the reason that certain circumstances and association of events center there. Aside from all improper adoration of persons or place, a gathering of the Lord's saints in this center may very properly serve to stimulate praise and thanksgiving for all the rich inheritance opened up to those who yet walk in the light and joy of the Truth.

As the time for this season of fellowship draws near, we urge the brethren to make it a matter of earnest prayer. We are reminded that, in olden time, when the people of God were about to gather for a holy convocation, they were admonished to "sanctify" themselves -- "yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into His sanctuary." Thus preparing for His presence and blessing. So much depends on having our hearts in an attitude to receive the full measure of the Lord's blessing. By prayerfully considering the solemn realities of the day in which we live, our hearts will be the better prepared to make this truly a "gathering together before the Lord," an occasion for magnifying His name and exalting His wondrous goodness, and having our hearts burn within us again as He talks to us by the way. To such worshippers the blessed promise still applies: "The Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

As previously announced, the various sessions of the Convention will be held in the O. of I. A. Temple, 610 Arch Street, formerly the Bible House Chapel, where for many years Brother Russell carried on his faithful ministry, and in which the Pittsburgh Church now meet regularly. For information regarding accommodations, etc., the friends may address Mr. James C. Jordan, 247 Greenwood Ave., Emsworth, Pittsburgh, Pa.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Brethren:

I received your letter of last week and noted carefully your position on the question of the book by the German brethren. Your attempt to maintain the liberty of the Church is certainly good and I heartily concur with it. Your sentiments in the "Herald Supplement" are also becoming those who would keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

One of the chief matters of the moment to the members of Christ's Body is to be able to discern the workings of the Adversary. The subtlety of his wiles is the whole cause of a divided body.

When once the Enemy has succeeded in getting God's saints to exposing each other's "error," he has accomplished a major part of what he has set out to do. To do this he will magnify a statement made by one brother through another who sees it somewhat different; then he will stir up an irritating spirit in the first, and that will give an appearance of justification to the second for his attitude -- and a split is accomplished. He has succeeded in getting each to blame the other while the real cause is himself our wily unseen foe.

We do not sufficiently realize that Satan is the cause of much that is blamed on innocent brethren, for the reason that we are not always sufficiently alert to see what spirit is working in our own minds. How few know "the depths of Satan"! Thanks be to our God our deliverance is near; but while we are left here in the flesh it is worth while to "strive together in our prayers," for the whole Church of God in the flesh.

Should it happen that any of the brethren visiting different places, come this way, we shall greatly value their presence and help, and we will take good care of them while here.

Yes, brethren, you are always taken before God when I pray. I seek to have a good conscience and full assurance of faith -- two necessary things, to be able to prevail with God. So few seem to realize the importance of persistent, prevailing prayer, and so very few are prepared to sacrifice their strength to tarry in God's presence till they receive what they ask for. (John 14:14.) God is searching out those who will stand in the breach, who are content to leave their boats and nets in His care (and how He does care for them) and take the burden of His cares on themselves. The Lord give us all the burden of His interests on our hearts and give us no rest night nor day till we come to that solemn hour when we shall unbuckle our armor in the presence of the King and stand ready to "give account.

Your brother in His service,

J. C. -- Idaho.